THE INDISCRETIONS *of* LADY SUSAN

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[LADY SUSAN TOWNLEY]

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
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TO STEVE

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,

BEING

SOME MEMORIES OF TWO HAPPY LIVES

IN WHICH HE PLAYED A GREAT PART

848129

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'INDISCRETIONS'
OF LADY SUSAN

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CHAPTER I

Looking Back

I raise the curtain with tales of my grandfather, and stories of my father and his family, including myself.

MY grandfather, George Keppel, sixth Earl of Albemarle, was born in 1799. I remember him quite well. He was always a delightful raconteur, and many is the yarn we heard from him at Quidenham, when in the winter evenings he gathered us round him before the old library fire. He would tell us how as a child he had been frightened into obedience by the cry of "Boney is coming!" and he recalled quite clearly the alarm produced in England by the avowed intention of Napoleon to invade our country.

As a boy he often stayed in London with his maternal grandmother, the Dowager Lady de Clifford, who was governess to the Princess Charlotte of Wales. She lived at No. 9, South Audley Street, within a stone's throw of Mrs. Fitzherbert, the wife of George, Prince of Wales. It was in this house that he was first presented to the Prince, afterwards George IV, a tall, good-humoured man with laughing eyes, pouting lips and a well-powdered wig with a profusion of curls

and a very large pigtail attached to it. The last pigtailed Englishman, within my grandfather's recollection, was William Keppel, his father's first cousin, who was equerry to George IV, in whose graces he held a very high place. The Duke of York once said to him, apropos of his hirsute adornment, "Why don't you get rid of that old-fashioned tail of yours?" "From the feeling," he replied with ready wit, "that actuates your Royal Highness in weightier matters—the dislike to part with an old friend!"

My grandfather spent his Easter holidays at St. Anne's Hill, Chertsey, with Charles Fox. The aged statesman used to wheel himself about in a chair, out of which he was never seen. All the morning he was invisible, transacting the business of his office, but at one o'clock, the children's dinner-hour, he appeared in their dining-room for his daily basin of soup. Lunch over, he became for the rest of the day their exclusive property. They adjourned to the garden, where trap-ball was the favourite game. As Fox could not walk he of course had the innings, the children fagging and bowling. The great statesman loved these games and laughed with glee when he sent a ball into the bushes to add to his score, but when bowled out he argued shamelessly to prove that he never ought to have been! It was in Mr. Fox's carriage that my grandfather was sent after the Easter holidays to his first school. He was then barely seven.

He subsequently went to Westminster School, where he spent seven years, during which he used to get week-end leave for visiting in turn his two grandmothers, Lady de Clifford, above mentioned, and the Dowager Lady Albemarle, whom he described as a kind-hearted woman, but not attractive to her

grandchildren. He remembered having his ears boxed by her after his return from the Waterloo campaign.

But Lady de Clifford, very unlike the Berkeley Square grandmother, was a staunch ally of her little grandson and fought his battles against all comers.

In January, 1805, when the Princess Charlotte of Wales had completed her ninth year, an establishment was formed for her education and placed under the control of Lady de Clifford.

Grandfather was for years after that a constant playmate of the Princess, of whom he had many a curious anecdote to tell. She was excessively violent in her disposition, but easily appeased, very warm-hearted, and never so happy as when doing a kindness. From her he received his first watch, his first pony and many a top.

When she went out shopping with Lady de Clifford, she thought it very amusing to assume an *alias*, and on these occasions would take the name of young Keppel's sister Sophia; but her own free and easy demeanour was in such contrast with the reserved and timid manner of the little girl whose personality she borrowed, that nobody who knew them both could possibly have been deceived.

On Saturdays Keppel was generally the guest of the Princess, but on Sundays she returned his visits either at his father's house at Earl's Court, Brompton, or at Lady de Clifford's villa at Paddington. On one of these occasions the Prince of Wales honoured Lady de Clifford with his company at luncheon. He was fond of good living, and considered her cook an artiste in her own line. But that day luncheon was unaccountably late, and the old lady rang the bell violently. When the meal was eventually served,

the mutton-chop was so ill-dressed that it was quite uneatable. On inquiry it was discovered that the Princess had acted as cook and young Keppel as her scullery maid.

In her visits to Earl's Court the Princess usually came in Lady de Clifford's carriage, and remained, at her own wish, as far as possible incognito. But once she arrived in her own, and the scarlet liveries soon betrayed her presence to the curious crowd without. The bystanders, catching sight of young Keppel inside the railings, called to him, telling him how anxious they were to have a sight of the Heiress Presumptive to the throne. The boy conveyed their message to the Princess.

"All right! they shall have that pleasure," was her reply. Slipping out of the garden gate into the road, she ran in among the people from the rear, craning her neck, calling upon the Princess to come out and be looked at! Then in boisterous spirits she escaped back to the house. On another occasion she dragged my grandfather off to the stables and then saddled and bridled a horse herself. Armed with a whip she led the animal into the yard. Young Keppel was told to mount. He, nothing loath, obeyed; he was rather proud of his horsemanship. But before he could grasp the reins and get his foot into the stirrup, she gave the horse a tremendous cut with the whip, so that he set off at a gallop round the confined space of the stable yard. My grandfather clung to his mane, roaring lustily. He hoped by hook or by crook to get into the saddle, but his cries attracted the rest of the family into the yard, which still further frightened the beast, so that he threw his heels into the air, sending the boy flying over his head. The

poor Princess got a terrible scolding from Lord Albemarle, alarmed for the safety of his boy, which so incensed her that when alone with him again she treated the father's son as she had just treated the father's horse!

In the month of June, 1814, my grandfather was present in London, when what he used irreverently to call a whole menagerie of "Lions" came over in the persons of Allied Sovereigns, and their most distinguished Generals, to visit the King, whose powerful co-operation had enabled them to hurl from the throne the mightiest tyrant who ever afflicted the world.

He waited on Westminster Bridge to see the passing of "Blutcher," as the Londoners used to call him. After an hour's wait loud cheering was heard on the Surrey side, accompanied by cries of "Blutcher for ever!" The object of this ovation turned out to be a fat, greasy butcher mounted on a sorry nag, carrying a meat tray on his shoulder. Shortly afterwards the real Marshal appeared, in a barouche drawn by four horses. The crowd gave him an enthusiastic reception, which he acknowledged by holding out his hand to be shaken by the men and kissed by the women. A century later Londoners were clamouring for the trial of the German Emperor.

When my grandfather first went to Westminster School a lamp-iron was fixed on the wall outside the house where he boarded, the only use of which was to assist the boarders to let themselves down into College Street after lock-up hours. He took kindly to the prevailing fashion, but after the Christmas holidays of 1814 he found on his return that the wall had been considerably heightened. As the need

for surreptitious exits was no less pressing than formerly, he made for himself a "Jacob's ladder" of rope, and thus provided let himself down with even less risk than before. Unfortunately, on March 18, 1815, when he returned from the play, the sight of the lay figure which he had left to personate him in bed, lying in confusion on the floor, proved that his escapade had been discovered. On the following day a letter from his father informed him that his school-days had come to an end. He was expelled. He was then still wanting three months to complete his sixteenth year.

His father decided that a military career was the one best suited to so high-spirited a youth, and thus it came to pass that a month or two later he received an official communication "On His Majesty's Service," ordering him forthwith to proceed to Flanders to join the third battalion of the 14th Foot, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Tidy.

Fourteen of the officers and three hundred of the men of this regiment were under twenty years of age, and they looked so young that, when drawn up in the Square at Brussels to be inspected by an old General of the name of Mackenzie, he no sooner set eyes on the corps than he called out: "Well! I never saw such a set of boys!" But seeing Tidy's annoyance at the expression, he hastily corrected himself, saying: "So *fine* a set of boys, both officers and men!" All the same, he could not reconcile it with his conscience to send such a lot of striplings on active service, and he ordered the Colonel to join a brigade about to proceed to garrison Antwerp. Tidy, however, wouldn't have it; he entreated Lord Hill, who was passing, to save so fine a regiment "from

the disgrace of garrison duty." Lord Hill appealed to the Duke on their behalf, who reversed the sentence. Then Tidy gave the longed-for word of command: "Fourteenth to the Front!"

And so it came to pass that my grandfather was present at the battle of Waterloo.

He had a very narrow escape of his life, for, at a critical moment of the battle, his regiment was ordered to lie down. Their square, hardly large enough to hold them when standing, was too small for them in a recumbent position. The men lay packed together like herrings in a barrel. Not finding a vacant spot, Keppel seated himself on a drum. Behind him was the Colonel's charger, who nibbled at the boy's epaulette. Suddenly his drum capsized and he was thrown prostrate with the sensation of a terrific blow on the cheek. He put his hand to his head, thinking half of it was shot away, but the skin was not even broken. A piece of shell had struck the horse's nose an inch from young Keppel's head, killing the poor beast instantly; it was from the horse's embossed bit that he received the staggering blow which made him think he was wounded. As a matter of fact, he was uninjured.

In December, 1815, his regiment was ordered home. Their reception in England was cold, a great contrast to some of the receptions we remember during the last War. The country was satiated with glory and brooding over the bill that would have to be paid. Fighting was at a discount, and the returning heroes found themselves at a serious disadvantage. "If we had been convicts disembarking from a hulk we could hardly have met with less consideration," my grandfather used to say. "It's us as pays they

chaps," was the remark of a country bumpkin watching the disembarkation, and this expression seemed to voice the popular feeling.

As soon as he got home Keppel tried to see something of his old friend Princess Charlotte, whose approaching marriage at that moment engrossed all thoughts. Hearing that she was to go in state to the Chapel Royal on the Sunday before her wedding, he went to the Peers' seat and looked up at the Royal pew. She caught sight of him instantly, and from under the shade of her joined hands made sundry telegraphic signals of recognition to him. When the service was over, he ran to the corner of St. James's Street to see her pass. She kissed her hand to him as she drove by, and continued to wave to him in her old friendly, informal way till she passed out of sight. It was the last time he saw her, for shortly afterwards he went away again with his regiment and was absent eighteen months. When he returned to England the flags of all the ships in the Channel were flying half-mast. The nation was mourning the death, in childbirth, of the young Princess whom it had fondly looked upon as its future queen.

My grandfather remembered quite well the trial of Queen Caroline of Brunswick, whom George IV tried to divorce in 1820 by Act of Parliament. Indeed, he was an eye- and ear-witness of all that passed in that celebrated case, for he was at the time equerry to the Duke of Sussex, who, though excused from attendance on the plea of his consanguinity to both parties, yet was desirous of hearing the earliest news possible of all that passed, and so kept young Keppel travelling backwards and forwards between Tunbridge Wells and London.

The Queen's coming to the House of Lords on the opening day of the trial was heralded by a confused sound of drums and trumpets. She was received at the threshold by Black Rod. The Peers rose as she entered and took her seat facing the Counsel on a chair of crimson and gilt. Her appearance was not prepossessing, as she was dressed all in black, with a high ruff round her neck, and on her head a bonnet surmounted by a huge bunch of nodding ostrich plumes. She wore a black wig with a profusion of curls, which fell over her face. Her painted eyebrows and highly-rouged cheeks added to her bold and defiant appearance. Her trial lasted many weeks. When the first witness was called, the Queen got up, threw her veil completely back, and stood with her arms akimbo. In this position she stared at him furiously for some seconds, then bursting into tears rushed screaming from the House. The impression made upon my grandfather was that she suffered from a sudden paroxysm of madness. He never forgot the scene. She did not reappear that day.

In the course of the trial the cashier of Coutts' Bank was called to attest the Queen's signature, and many another humiliation she had to bear. The chief witnesses brought against her were low-born Italians, who appeared at the bar of the House as respectable as fine clothes and soap and water could make them! They were kept from August till November close prisoners in a building which separated the Houses of Parliament and was known, with its enclosure, as "Cotton Garden." Here they were guarded by a strong military force, and their provisions were stealthily introduced by night for fear of the London mob, who would have torn the witnesses

to pieces if they could have got hold of them. Henry Brougham, Attorney-General to the Queen, was her fearless advocate and conducted her defence. In the public estimation he sacrificed all prospects of professional advancement in order to defend the cause of a cruelly persecuted woman—and he achieved his end, for, on November 6 the House divided on the second reading of the so-called "Pains and Penalties Bill," and it was thrown out by a majority of twenty against. This virtual defeat of the Government was celebrated by illuminations and other tokens of popular rejoicings throughout the length and breadth of the land, for the people insisted upon seeing in the Queen only an ill-treated, innocent and loving wife. My grandfather accompanied the Duke of Sussex when he went from Tunbridge Wells to Brandenburg House to pay her his visit of congratulation.

It was while still waiting on the Duke of Sussex at Kensington Palace, where he had his quarters at that time, that my grandfather remembered seeing the late Queen Victoria as a small child of seven. He used to watch the little Princess from his window playing in the Palace gardens. She was in the habit of watering the flowers, and most impartially she divided the contents of her watering-can between the flowers and her own little feet.

My ancestors were much favoured in old days by the Royal Family. Thus Bagshot Park, now occupied by the Duke of Connaught, was given by George II to young Keppel's grandfather, and his two grand-uncles, Augustus and William, for their respective lives. At the death of the eldest brother, Lord Albemarle, in 1772, Bagshot came into the occupation

of Admiral Sir Augustus, afterwards Viscount, Keppel, but he, wishing to make over the residence to George III's brother, the Duke of Cumberland, applied to His Majesty for a renewal of the grant, which request was peremptorily refused. According to family tradition, the King was so rejoiced at being able thus to defeat the wishes of his brother, for whom he had no kindly feeling, that he burst into a paroxysm of laughter, so long and uncontrolled that it was afterwards looked upon as the first symptom of that mental malady of which the unhappy monarch soon after gave sign.

At the risk of wearying my readers with these tales of long ago, I must recall one or two more of the amusing anecdotes which my grandfather used to tell us. His father had been a great favourite of William IV, from whom he received the appointment of Master of the Horse. The stud-house was assigned to Lord Albemarle to live in, and there the King paid him frequent visits, on which occasions my grandfather was often present.

The King was very fond of making after-dinner speeches. One night he proposed somebody's health "with all the honours." There was a footman at the time in the Royal service called Sykes, who was as fond of a glass of wine as anyone else at Court, and on this occasion, unmindful of the tell-tale mirror before which he stood, he took advantage of the King's toast to toss off a tumbler of claret behind the screen. Unfortunately, the King caught sight of his reflection in the act, and next day told Albemarle that as others had seen it also he had better get the man out of sight for a time till the affair had been forgotten. So Lord Albemarle sent him as game-

keeper to a remote lodge in Windsor Park, whence he gradually climbed back into the Royal service as porter at the equerry's entrance to the castle. It is said that some people have greatness thrust upon them, and evidently Sykes was one of these, for he was destined once again to attract public attention, and this in a most comic way. A party of North American Indian chiefs came to England, and being most desirous to see the King, travelled down for the express purpose to Windsor. The first person they fell in with outside the Castle was Sykes, taking a mouthful of air in scarlet coat and huge gold epaulettes. The Indians, of course, came to the conclusion that he must be their "great white father," and forming a circle round him, they treated the astonished flunkey to their best war dance. This incident, for the truth of which I cannot vouch, *Punch* reproduced that week in one of his inimitable cartoons.

My grandfather was one of the crowd who saw Queen Victoria on the day of her Proclamation. He described her as appearing at the open window of the Privy Council Chamber in St. James's Palace looking on the quadrangle nearest Marlborough House. Enthusiastic cheers greeted the young Sovereign's first appearance. At the sound of the first shouts the colour faded from her cheeks and her eyes filled with tears. But with winning courtesy the girl-Sovereign bowed her acknowledgments of the proffered homage.

He later attended Her Majesty as groom-in-waiting, on the occasion of the opening of her first Parliament in 1838. He was again in waiting on the day of her Coronation, and on that of her marriage, in 1840, with Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg. After the cere-

mony he accompanied the Royal pair to Windsor, and in the following year had the honour of being presented by the Queen herself to the Princess Royal, afterwards German Empress, who on that occasion was a baby but a few days old lying in her cot!

My grandfather married one of the two lovely daughters of Sir Coutts Trotter, the other being married to General Lindsay, of Balcarres. Keppel was a Whig, Lindsay a Tory, and both were standing for Parliament, one on each side of the Tweed. Sir Coutts, who had been brought up a strong Tory, didn't know to which party to wish success. To some one who asked him on which side his sympathy lay, he responded on the spur of the moment:

> "Whether Tory or Whig
> I can't say for my life.
> I'm a Whig in East Norfolk,
> A Tory in Fife!"

My father was the eldest child and only son of the young Keppel I have been writing about. He was born in 1832, the same year as Bob Lindsay, afterwards Lord Wantage, his first cousin, their mothers being sisters. As my father had no brother, the two became, and remained through life, inseparable friends. Together they went to their first school, a school of the old type, where the master's ill-humour was vented with uncontrolled tyranny upon his pupils. But I am sure nothing could have suppressed such an irrepressible pair as the two cousins. Together they went on to Eton, where at old "Judy" Durnford's house they spent many happy years together, taking their studies rather easily, but becoming most expert Wet Bobs on the river. They left Eton the same day and both entered the Guards. Thereafter

the varying vicissitudes of their two lives often separated them but as often brought them together again, in the House of Commons, the Volunteer Service and the War Office. One who knew them well as boys and young men used to speak of the contrast they made. Bury, my father, was clever, versatile, light-hearted, brilliant in talk, endowed with quick perception and capacity to master any subject he took up, full of life and energy—while Lindsay was quieter and more reserved, but strong in character and steadfastness of purpose. Perhaps this very contrast made the bond closer which united them.

My own earliest recollections of my father take me back to the "'seventies," when, as a little girl, I played in his study with his paint brushes (he was always sketching when he wasn't writing) or listened at table to his stories which used to keep everybody laughing. He had a fund of anecdotes, and such a keen sense of humour that his own delight with the story he was telling invariably became contagious amongst his auditors.

He had met and married my mother, a daughter of Sir Allan Macnab, Prime Minister of Canada, during the time he spent in that country as A.D.C. to the Governor-General, Sir Edmund Head. Canadian brides were a novelty in England at that time, and great was the excitement in London society at the news of this marriage. My mother was a beautiful girl, and soon won her place in the affections of her young husband's family; but she must have had her trials to bear, I fancy, for, from being her father's constant companion in Canada, sharing all the interests and anxiety of his high office (her mother had died when she was only fourteen), she found herself suddenly in a strange

QUIDENHAM HALL

From an old Engraving

land the wife of an eldest son, under the careful chaperonage of a rather severe and very dignified mother-in-law. When her first baby was expected she was treated almost as an invalid, never allowed to go out except in the carriage, and stair-climbing being forbidden her by Lady Albemarle, the bell was rung and a pompous pair of footmen arrived with a carrying-chair whenever she wanted to go upstairs!

Luckily for her, she and my father only spent part of the year at Quidenham, the family seat in Norfolk: they had their own house in London, first in Rutland Gate and afterwards in Prince's Gate, where I was born.

Our house was faced, on the opposite side of the road, by the Indian Museum, an old wooden building at that time, and, to our childish delight, it one day caught fire and burnt to the ground. I remember hanging out of the nursery window, with my small sisters, counting the fire-engines which, with splendid dash, raced up to the scene of the conflagration one after another, till no less than twenty-nine had been brought into operation. Our windows became so hot that at one moment it was thought the fire might spread across the street, but the hose was played upon the house and thus was averted the necessity of a hurried exit, which would have placed the crown on our enjoyment.

Many years we lived at Prince's Gate, in fact, until my dear father died in 1893. Six months of the year we used to spend in town when Parliament was sitting, and six in the country at a place called Elmhurst, in Hampshire, quite near Bournemouth, a house my father bought, and there we spent most

of our childish summers till he succeeded his father and we went to Quidenham. The bi-annual flittings were events of great moment, for I suppose with so many children (there were nine of us—three boys and six girls) it was considered an extravagance to have a double set of beds for all the babies, so our cots did double duty in town and country, and the night before the "journey" we slept in a row on the nursery floor in the drawers of a big chest which did duty as beds.

As I have said, we were nine children, and we fell naturally into three groups. There were "the boys," who went to school and had a holiday tutor; the "girls," my three elder sisters, who had a schoolroom to themselves and a German governess, and "the babies," of which I was the eldest, who had a lower schoolroom and a French governess.

When the boys came home for the holidays it may be imagined that we had a "full house," and great were the pranks we played, regardless of the awful consequences of them.

For my father and mother were of the old school, and in those days very little latitude was allowed the young ones. Besides, the presence in the house of an English tutor, a German governess and a French one did little to contribute to the general peace.

We were certainly the naughtiest children I have met in fact or fiction. My brothers had been brought up practically on the river, for the Avon flowed at the bottom of our garden and was only divided by a sandbank from the open sea, beyond which, clearly visible on the horizon were the Isle of Wight and the Needles. Almost as soon as they could walk they were taught to swim, to sail a boat and paddle

a canoe. They each had their own canoe, and my father was the proud possessor of a lifeboat which had been presented to him by the Coastguard Station in recognition of a wonderful act of gallantry on his part when, observing from the terrace of our garden a capsized fishing-boat at sea with three men clinging to it, he called to the coastguard on duty and rowed out with him in a flat-bottomed boat, the only skiff available, to the men's assistance, a fierce gale blowing at the time. There had been three men in distress when my father first saw them, but one was washed away before he reached them, the second died of exhaustion on the way back, but the third survived and lived many years after.

In this lifeboat, which, of course, having air compartments could not sink, my brothers learnt the ways of the sea for which to this day they have kept their love. Many a prank they played in her. I remember that on one occasion the tutor, out of temper with my youngest brother for some youthful indiscretion, took him into a secluded part of the garden, and tying him to a tree, laid into him with a riding-whip till the poor little fellow could hardly stand. The two elder boys, helpless witnesses of this act of barbarity, secretly vowed vengeance. On the following day they invited the tutor to go for a row on the Avon. Unsuspectingly he accepted. When in the middle of the river, they threw the oars overboard and quietly took the cork out of the bottom of the boat which, of course, began to fill. Then they waved a cheerful "so long" to the terrified man, and jumping into the water swam ashore, leaving him to what he supposed was a watery end. The air-compartments,

sister and myself wore checked ulsters and white straw hats trimmed with blue silk bows.

I often laugh even now when I think of the sight we must have presented to my uncle's horrified gaze when we landed from the gig and had to be presented to the Princess of Wales, who I remember wore a charming blue serge dress, her little girls being dressed exactly like herself.

But we children were perfectly unselfconscious. My sister Hilda knew that George ought to bow from the waist, but that we as girls should curtsy, and though she herself got entangled in her unaccustomed tail, and fell over in the attempt, she righted herself and stood by decorously whilst we all went through the same ceremonious performance on the sand.

The Prince and Princess were quite charming to us, and as Uncle Harry took charge of the games, the memory of that day has never departed from me. Wheelbarrows, fetched from Highcliff Castle, played a prominent part, the great game being for the sailors to run us out in them into the surf, from which we extricated ourselves as best we could. Both the young Princes, the present King and his brother, the late Duke of Clarence, shared in the game, and while we played, their father and mother sat on the sands with Lady Waterford and watched us.

We used to go every summer to Quidenham to spend three months with our grandfather and grandmother. I have already mentioned a few recollections of those days.

As I grew older the routine of home life was also broken for me by visits to my father's old playmate and life-long friend, "Uncle Bob," and his wife "Aunt Harriet," with whom I used to spend long

weeks at Lockinge. With them I made yearly excursions abroad, and so began my life of travel and adventure. I was devoted to them both, and many of the happiest memories of my younger days are associated with them.

I remember in particular one delightful week of military manœuvres on the Berkshire Downs. I think it was in 1893. The Duke of Cambridge was Commander-in-Chief and stayed for the week at Lockinge. Lord Wolseley, Sir Redvers Buller, Lord Downe, Sir Baker Russell and Sir Evelyn Wood were also there in their professional capacity, besides many other soldiers. The Duchess of Rutland and I were amongst the ladies who rode about with them all day during manœuvres and danced with them all night, for they were very gay when the day's work was done. On the Sunday there was a full-dress church parade, and when the officers in uniform came out of church they gathered round the Duke in the garden discussing with him the week's manœuvres. Lord Wantage was always very keen on anything of the kind, but Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood considered that when work was over it was time for play. He came up to me and pointing to a long avenue stretching away from where we stood he challenged me to a race with him, for he was very proud of his running powers. Lord Wantage overheard his challenge and immediately entered into the spirit of the joke. "That's right, Evelyn," he said, "and I'll be the judge! Here, take off your hat and your sword-belt, and H.R.H. shall give the prize." So a ring was formed and a starting-line stretched, behind which Sir Evelyn and I took our places waiting for the signal to "Go!"

I had heard of Sir Evelyn's fleetness of foot, and realizing that I should have no chance, I saved my face by playing a trick on him. When Lord Wantage dropped the flag I ran a few paces, then returned quietly to the starting-post, leaving Sir Evelyn speeding alone in full uniform down the garden path. The sight was so comic that everybody roared with laughter. The future Field-Marshal bore me no ill-will. He was the quaintest old man. I remember on another occasion during the same visit he told me that he could repeat the Lord's Prayer in seven languages, including Hindustani. We were alone in the big hall at Lockinge at the moment, awaiting the summons to dinner. I dared him to prove it. He said he could only do it kneeling, as otherwise he couldn't remember the words. I fetched him a chair. He popped down on his knees, and shutting his eyes began to race through his task. Being very deaf he did not hear the guests gradually assembling for dinner. He was surprised when he opened his eyes at the finish to find them all laughing. But he enjoyed the joke as much as anybody.

In the year 1896 I married Walter Townley, son of Charles Townley, of Fulbourne Manor, for many years Lord-Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire. He was at that time a Second Secretary in the Diplomatic Service. My married life has led me so far afield that, in deference to the wishes of my friends, I have set down here some recollections of it in the shape of chapters on many lands.

THE LATE KING CHARLES OF PORTUGAL

ASSASSINATED 1ST FEBRUARY, 1908

CHAPTER II

Lisbon

Lisbon in the days of King Carlos—People I met there, and how I diplomatically fainted to avoid trouble with a German swashbuckler.

WE went to Lisbon in 1898, when the unfortunate King Carlos and his beautiful Queen Amelie were ruling. The Portuguese capital was at that time a strange mixture of splendour and primitiveness—a big country village with one important modern avenue, and for the rest, picturesque, dusty, narrow streets, cobbled and sunlit. Up and down the steep angles of these, clattered horse-drawn vehicles controlled on the perilous descent by handbrakes, the grating of which on wheels formed one of the most persistent sounds in the discord of street music. The ubiquitous tram, of course, figured in some of the streets and ran along the road to Cascaes, but that was one of the most modern notes in the town. A very picturesque feature were the fish-girls, whose accordion-pleated black skirts reminded one of the Highland kilt, as they swung above their bare legs. Their heads were generally crowned by immense fish-baskets, the weight and poise of which lent grace to the rhythmic stride of their lithe young bodies. These fish-girls are so much a feature of Lisbon that their baskets are reproduced in silver by the jewellers and

carried away yearly in hundreds by tourists hunting for souvenirs.

The most beautiful garden in Lisbon, that city of gardens, was the one belonging to the British Legation, which was planned years ago by Sir Henry Layard. From its terrace overlooking the port it used to have the most beautiful view in the town, but it later was spoilt by a row of buildings set up opposite to it on the foreshore of the river.

We ourselves lived in a funny white house in the Via Ariago, and here we had some most amusing times. For we were young, the sun was bright, and cares were few in those early days of our married life. We were very lucky in the other members composing the *corps diplomatique* and we used to see a great deal of each other. I suppose because we were idle and had few tasks in that sleepy little capital (later to be awakened by so ghastly a tragedy) we indulged in more flirtations and intrigues than in other serious and harder-worked posts. Even a sedate Minister Plenipotentiary was once caught by his hostess lumbering round the billiard-table in chase of the fair wife of his French colleague. I remember another incident which occurred at our house and which might have had a disagreeable sequel in a less happy-go-lucky *milieu*. A lady leaving after a dinner-party pressed a note into the hand of an Italian Count as she bade him good night. This token he cynically opened and read aloud as soon as she had left the room. It was an assignation!

Friends of ours used to come from England and we did our best to amuse them. The Marquis de Soveral, the popular Portuguese diplomatist, who has so frequently been a guest in Royal circles,

used to come there yearly to visit his old parents, who lived in Lisbon, and to pay his homage at Court. The Russian Minister, Count Meyendorff, entertained on a lavish scale and was very witty. The story is told of him that when a young man he was sent by his Chief to St. Petersburg with dispatches to be delivered personally to Prince Gortchakoff, the clever but irascible statesman who, as Foreign Minister, was the terror of all who served under him. On taking leave of the great man, Meyendorff asked him if he wished any special message conveyed back to his Chief. "Vous lui direz que vous avez vu le lion dans sa *tanière*!" ("Tell him you have beheld the lion in his lair") said Gortchakoff in his most terrible voice. "Bien Altesse," answered the irrepressible youth, unable to resist a joke, "je lui dirai que j'ai vu cet animal!" ("Right, Altesse, *I'll* tell him I've seen the brute!") a pleasantry which it is said cost him his subsequent advancement in the Service. He never rose to be more than Minister Plenipotentiary at Lisbon, a post of very minor importance for Russia.

The Italian Minister, another of our colleagues, was supposed to be a confirmed bachelor and not very meticulous in his personal habits. Great excitement was created, therefore, when he once returned from leave in a cab, on the top of which figured a shining new hip-bath, whilst inside sat a lady, young and of high degree, whom he had married during his visit home.

The German Secretary, Count Wangenheim, afterwards Ambassador in Constantinople during the Great War, was a huge, truculent fellow with a scar across his cheek received in his youth in a duel with a man

whom he slew in single combat, a crime which he expiated by some months' detention in a fortress. This story impressed me greatly, especially as, true to his habit, shortly after his arrival in Lisbon he challenged the very diminutive Secretary of the Austrian Legation in connexion with some trivial dispute. I was always afraid he would pick a quarrel with my husband. One night he and the Belgian Secretary dined at our house, and afterwards we sat down to a game of cards. Walter objected to something in his play, whereupon, to my horror, with a furious gesture he threw his cards on the table. I saw my worst fears about to be realized, and, deeming the situation critical, I gracefully subsided under the table in a simulated faint. "Get him out of the house," I whispered to the Belgian Secretary who assisted my husband to carry me from the room, "get the brute away!" He was got away, but in such a state of excitement that on his way home he had a heart attack in the street and was laid up for days. Anxious to placate him, I sent him soup and champagne, which had the curious effect of so improving our relations that, upon recovery, he promptly asked my husband and myself to dine with him. We accepted, but even that dinner was not to pass off without incident, and, to my surprise, I suddenly saw a look of anger pass over Walter's face. Said he, addressing the Hun in icy terms, "That is *my* foot, Count Wangenheim!" Apparently he had been searching for mine! How like a German to make a mistake.

The French Secretary's wife was a very pretty little woman, not devoid of vanity, which once led her to suggest, as an after-dinner game, the curious

THE QUEEN OF PORTUGAL

amusement of letting down our hair to see whose tresses were longest, a competition which, of course, she won, as she knew she would, for she had a most glorious crop of raven locks. It makes one feel young to look back on the foolish pastimes that amused one in those far-away days.

The Court did not entertain on a large scale, though more than once during our year at Lisbon the *corps diplomatique* were received by Their Majesties. On these occasions a *cercle* was formed and the King and Queen used to make the round addressing a few gracious words to each guest. The Crown jewels of Portugal, especially the diamonds, were supposed to be the most beautiful in Europe, and well did they adorn the lovely Queen, whose beauty was enhanced by the majesty of her bearing. The fashions at that time were very trying, with tight skirts and overloaded bodices, the enormous mutton-chop sleeves in vogue taking all grace from the figure. But the dress of the day, ugly and cumbersome as it was, could not detract from the charm of Queen Amelie.

The King was enormously fat, but fond of sport and a first-class shot. We used to see them often driving about Lisbon, their little sons with them, dressed in dark blue jersey suits with red Basque bérets on their heads. Often I have pictured since the scene of their brutal murder, when the vengeful mob attacked the carriage in which they drove and shot the King and his eldest son, whilst the Queen gallantly but vainly endeavoured to save them by throwing herself across their bodies at imminent risk to her own life. When I had my farewell audience with Her Majesty prior to leaving Lisbon, she received me in her boudoir, a sumptuously furnished room with

three great white bearskins thrown upon the parquet floor. She sat in a tall carved arm-chair, the back of which formed a Royal crown above the level of her head. I had a long talk with her. She envied me going back to England. "There are two things in life," she said, "that I enjoy, riding and skating, and neither are possible in Lisbon. How I should love to live again in your beautiful country!" How little did either of us foresee the tragic destiny which was so soon to bring to her the realization of that wish.

My husband took leave that same day of King Carlos, who kept his Cabinet waiting one hour while he discussed with him his favourite topic of sport, shooting in particular. As he said good-bye he exclaimed: "You lucky fellow! What would I not give to be a free man, rather than a King. I should love to live in Paris and enjoy life!"

CHAPTER III

Berlin

Berlin society as I knew it—Recollections of the Emperor Frederick, and of the ex-Kaiser before and after he came to the throne—How Cecil Rhodes directed the Kaiser's ambitions towards Baghdad—What the English in Berlin suffered during the Boer War, and how the Kaiser wanted to show us how to win it.

WE had not been long in Lisbon when my husband's appointment to Berlin in the year 1899 gave me my first opportunity of meeting the ex-Kaiser.

Walter's recollection of him dates much further back than my own. As a boy (studying German in Berlin), he was present in 1881 at Prince Wilhelm's wedding, which he was invited to witness from the gallery of the Weisser Saal in company with the royal bridegroom's three young unmarried sisters: Princess Sophie, who afterwards married the King of Greece; Princess Marguerite, who married H.R.H. Prince Frederick Charles of Hesse; and Princess Victoria, who became the wife of H.R.H. Prince Adolphe of Schaumburg-Lippe.

My husband was back again in Germany in 1883, when he went to Potsdam to stay with Sir John Walsham, at that time First Secretary at our Embassy. While there he was frequently invited to the Neues Palais to play lawn tennis, or rather what *they* called lawn tennis, which was a strange game played on a

long narrow asphalt court with invariably three players on each side of the net.

He was playing one day with the Empress Frederick and Prince Karl of Hesse against the ex-Kaiser (then Prince William), the Duke of Connaught and Princess Victoria of Prussia. The Empress Frederick (then Crown Princess) became very excited when she found her side winning, and played with such vigour that my husband, taking more than his share of this bewildering game and running back at a ball which he never thought she would attempt, collided violently with her, knocking her down, so that, to his horror, she measured her length on the ground.

"Oh!" she cried, "I believe my arm is broken!"

Walter helped her to rise and left the palace very crestfallen, but the Crown Princess, realizing his distress, sent him a friendly telegram that evening, assuring him that her arm was not very badly hurt.

Next day, at the military manœuvres, she was reviewing her regiment on horseback. She caught sight of Walter watching the ceremony and waved the injured arm to give him ocular proof that the damage done had not been so serious after all.

My husband's recollection of the Kaiser as a boy is of a hot-tempered, intolerant youth, whose rudeness to his mother before strangers shocked Walter's English ideas. Never would he play at tennis on the same side as his mother, and if he was beaten, he invariably lost his temper and flung down his racket.

To Walter, a rather shy boy, he was very variable in his manner. On one day he would be amiable to the point of familiarity, slapping him on the back with a hearty hail-fellow-well-met sort of air, but on another occasion he would be excessively distant

and stand-offish. At all times he resented the slightest deviation from the strictest Court etiquette on the part of others.

The Crown Princess was then, as always, British to her finger-tips, and made no secret of the superiority she attributed to her Mother Country over any other. She emphasized these feelings to a degree wanting, perhaps, in tact, and her German children retaliated by "drawing her" whenever they could.

Thus, for instance, on one occasion at five-o'clock tea Walter remembers the two Princesses, then girls of twelve and fifteen, dipping their cake into their tea-cups, with the obvious intention of annoying her. The Crown Princess rose to the bait like a fish to a fly. "Now stop that, children!" she cried, "none of your nasty German habits at my table!"

Poor woman! She remained English in the midst of her German surroundings. She continually chafed at the rigid formalities of the Prussian capital. How much better one understands now all that she must have suffered in the process of being "Prussianized"! Not that the process was ever really accomplished in her case, for when she died she left a request that she might be buried wrapped in the Union Jack.

But apart from frequent conflicts with her son, whose intolerant spirit could never brook her control even as a boy, her married life was a very happy one. She adored her husband. Germany might have been a very different country if it had expanded on the broad cultured lines followed by the Emperor Frederick and his English Consort.

The Emperor Frederick[1] was a man of charming

[1] The Emperor Frederick, father of the ex-Kaiser, reigned from March 9 to June 15, 1888.

manners and liberal ideas. He and my father, the seventh Earl of Albemarle, bore an extraordinary facial likeness to each other. They were married the same year, and their eldest sons each married and had a son in the lifetime of his own grandfather. Thus four generations flourished at one time in the male line of both families, and both were justly proud of it. They exchanged photographs commemorating the fact.

To me the Empress Frederick seemed of all Queen Victoria's children the one who most strongly resembled King Edward in vigour of intellect and charm of personality. I used to see her at Homburg, where we spent a few weeks every year while we were at the Embassy in Berlin. Her beloved Friedrichsruhe was in the Forest, just outside the little watering-place. She was then a sad and dignified woman in the evening of life, clothed always in black with a lace mantilla draped over her white hair. We several times had the honour of dining with her. I remember a laughable episode at one of those dinners. King Edward, then Prince of Wales, was present, and I sat next to him, opposite the Empress, who had Walter on one side of her and Count Seckendorff, her trusted friend and private secretary, on the other. The table was a narrow one, and the conversation was general, as is the usual custom abroad, but on this occasion the Empress was very silent, and at last I saw her turn to Count Seckendorff and say something to him in a low tone, at the same time pointing to me. Count Seckendorff leant towards me across the table and said quite distinctly so that all could hear, "The Empress wishes me to say she regrets she cannot take much part in the conversation to-night, *for*

Her Majesty has spoilt her stomach." This literal translation of a German idiom (*hat sich den Magen verdorben*) which implied that the Empress was suffering from indigestion, so amused the Prince of Wales that he gave way to uncontrolled laughter, in which the gentle Empress shared in spite of the fact that she was that evening so evidently far from well.

This was the last time I saw her. She died in August of the following year.

It was shortly before the Boer War that we arrived in the German capital. With a *joie de vivre* not yet tempered by years of diplomacy, I extracted the maximum of amusement out of every day we spent there, and at that time Berlin was quite a gay city, though not so smart as the Kaiser would have wished. He realized, I think, that there was between Berlin and Paris, or London, all the difference that there is between beer and champagne. He would have loved to top German thoroughness with a little naughty Gallic froth! Personally, I found him charming. He was in mourning then for his wife's mother, and we on our side were also in Court mourning, so that neither the Court nor the Embassy could entertain or see anything of society. But it was possible for the Emperor to come alone to a "family" Embassy, even though he was in mourning, so it happened that he often dined quite informally with his dear friend, Sir Frank Lascelles, our delightful chief.

I remember the commotion caused on one of these occasions by the fact that the combined knife and fork which he manipulated with one hand at table had been left behind. It had to be sent for to the Palace, and, to the dismay of all present, he let the sparks fly, upbraiding his equerry for his forgetfulness.

His anger, I think, was principally due to the galling exposure of his infirmity which the incident occasioned, for he was extremely sensitive on this point and always at pains to hide the fact that his left arm hung useless in the sleeve of his coat, the cuff of which was attached to one of the buttons of his tunic.

Apart from this defect and from the ridiculously fierce expression of William the Frightful caused by the careful upward training of his moustachios, the Emperor, I think, might have passed as a handsome man, though far from possessing the good looks of his father.

At dinner on these informal occasions at the Embassy he was at his best, gay, debonair, informal, and witty. After dinner I often had a chance of a *tête-à-tête* talk with him, for there were no ladies present, except old Lady Edward Cavendish, Sir Frank Lascelles' sister, who entertained for him, and his then unmarried daughter, Florence. Various snatches of those conversations come back to me.

Once, after some outburst on his part against England, I asked him why he hated us so. "Why, of course," he laughed, "it is a plain case of '*der Neid des armen Vetters fur den reichen!*'" (The jealousy of the poor cousin for the rich!) Many a true word is spoken in jest!

Often he talked of the British and German Navies. "The curious thing is," he once remarked, "that had I been a second son I should have been a sailor. How often I envy my brother. My one love is for the sea. How much I should have preferred a naval to a military career!"

Frequently he expressed a half-despairing admiration for the British Navy. "Ah, never can my Navy

equal yours," he would sigh, "for you can man your ships with sea-born crews, whereas mine come from the interior of Germany—my sailors are made, not born—and that means so much, all other things being equal!"

His admiration for our Fleet waxed after the outbreak of the Boer War. He was astounded at the rapidity of our transport of the first 20,000 troops to South Africa.

"The British Navy is the finest in the world," he said. "Our Navy can never emulate its efficiency."

A dislike of the Jewish element in his country seemed deeply implanted in him. "The Jews are the curse of my country," he once said to me. "They keep my people poor and in their clutches. In every small village in Germany sits a dirty Jew, like a spider drawing the people into the web of usury. He lends money to the small farmers on the security of their land and so gradually acquires control of everything. The Jews are the parasites of my Empire. The Jewish question is one of the great problems I have to deal with, and yet nothing can be done to cope with it!"

In later years he apparently got over this dislike of Jews—although when we were in Berlin they were socially ostracized by his wish. I remember in particular a certain lady, rich, attractive, socially ambitious, who but for her origin would have been a success from the start of her social career. But she could not force the portals of Berlin society, not even though she added a covered tennis-court and a riding-school to the already numerous amenities of her beautiful house in the Pariser Platz. She climbed and climbed, but when I left Berlin she had not succeeded in reach-

ing the top, although to accomplish her end she had recourse to all sorts of expedients.

Once she called me up on the telephone to ask if we would dine with her that night and go to the opera. "The Schönborns are coming," she said (he was Private Secretary to the Chancellor). Being suspicious, and having to be careful on account of my husband's official position, I promised to send an answer later, and meanwhile called up Princess Schönborn to ask if they really were dining with the F.'s that night. "Certainly not," she said, "and I was much surprised when she rang me up just now to tell me that *you* were!"

And so the little dodge failed. But I am told that before the war she had "got there" and that her dinners were among the most brilliant in the capital, the Emperor himself being among her guests.

In spite of the fierceness of his appearance, I always found the Emperor very easy to talk to. He was often in a chaffing mood and did not disdain to laugh at my jokes. Once I made some mocking allusion to his statue of Victory, which we could see from the window standing on her column at the end of the Tiergarten, with her finger pointing at Paris. "What," I said, "does that ugly stout lady represent?"

"Ugly? Stout?" he gasped. "Why, that is my Victory! She represents our great triumph in the Franco-Prussian War."

"Well," I remarked, "I think she's rather improper. You should let down her frock."

The Kaiser was highly amused, nor did he forget my poor little joke, for when years afterwards my brother went to Berlin he said to him, "Tell Lady Susan my Victory is now in the fashion!" This

being an allusion to the short skirts by that time in vogue.

The ex-Kaiser has often been abused for the atrocious bad taste of the Sieges Allee (Avenue of Victory), but the idea of it, as he explained it to me, was finely conceived, I think. "When I went to Athens as a child with my mother," he said, "and saw the deeds of the Greeks immortalized in their splendid marbles, I realized what a powerful stimulus to patriotism was the history of a country written in stone, and I made up my mind that some day I would try to do something of the same kind for my own people. Books of history are very dry! Statues would, at least, make them ask questions!"

We were once present at a dinner given to the Kaiser at our Embassy when Cecil Rhodes was the guest of honour asked to meet him. At this dinner (it was in 1899, if I remember right) an incident occurred hitherto unrecorded, which I am convinced had great future political interest for both Britain and Germany.

Before the dinner, Cecil Rhodes had been speaking of his grand conception of an All-British Cape to Cairo Railway, the greatest transcontinental line in the world. At that time this scheme was threatened by the lively interest which Germany displayed in African trade development.

"If only we could make the Kaiser abandon his African schemes and leave us free to get on with ours," Rhodes said. "But he's so obstinate. Once he has thought out a plan nothing will make him change it. . . . Unless," he added reflectively, "I could think of some other scheme to put before him that would fire his imagination and lead him off on another scent!"

After dinner the ladies retired, as usual, but my husband told me afterwards how the Emperor and Rhodes fell at once into an animated conversation. In pursuance of the plan that had occurred to him before dinner, Rhodes set to work to draw a red herring across the Kaiser's trail by leading the conversation on to the topic of Mesopotamia.

"If my thoughts were not centred on Africa," he declared, "that would be the field of development that would attract me most. Not only is it capable of becoming the granary of the world, but it is the obvious route to the Far East and to the undeveloped markets of Persia and Afghanistan. The way to those countries lies through Baghdad!"

I knew how much Cecil Rhodes had hoped to gain from this after-dinner talk, and it may be judged with what eagerness I watched for his reappearance. When after a long time the men joined us, his face was flushed with excitement. "Thank God," he whispered, "I believe I have done the trick. I have side-tracked him out of Africa!"

For the remainder of that evening the Kaiser was pensive. He seemed much occupied with his own thoughts. Probably he was turning over in his mind a great new scheme suggested to him by Rhodes' apparently unguarded remarks. For a moment he stood talking to me before he left.

"If I had a man like Rhodes to carry out my schemes," he said, "I should be the greatest Emperor in the world."

I am convinced that at that moment was born the idea of the Baghdad-Bahn.

Some years afterwards (1912) when my husband was in Bukarest as British Minister, he was received in

private audience by the late King Charles of Rumania. On this occasion that astute Sovereign laid great stress on the fact that in his opinion the Germans were wrong to attach so much importance to the Baghdad railway. The true direct line from Berlin to the East, as he saw it, was via Bukarest and Constanza to a port on the Black Sea, such as Batum in the Caucasus or Trebizond, and thence to Persia. "I cannot understand how they were led to take this scheme up," he said.

We recalled that conversation when, in February, 1918, Russia was forced to sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany. On the face of it, it did not seem clear why Germany should insist upon Russia returning to Turkey, or rather to the "self-determination" of the Caucasians, those districts in the Caucasus taken from them after the war of 1877. But the proviso brought back to *our* minds King Carol's words spoken in 1912, and made us wonder whether the Germans, confronted with the impossibility of establishing their Baghdad-Bahn, were not looking to that alternative route to the Far East which King Carol had outlined.

But enough of politics!

The cheeriest times we spent in Berlin were during the winter season, when the Court functions annually took place. For these few weeks people in the social world from Silesia, Bavaria, and other distant centres flocked to the capital, and many were the entertainments given in their honour. The South German women, especially the half-Austrians, were much prettier, smarter and gayer than the Prussians, and the *corps diplomatique* looked forward to the relaxed formality which the southern element introduced for a few short weeks into dull heavy Berlin.

Our own entertaining, before the death of the Empress's mother put an end for us to all social festivities, took the form of a dinner dance, which was great fun.

Two incidents connected with it were typical of Berlin. The day before the intended dance, which was to end up with a *cotillon*, two young officers, whose acquaintance I had not yet made, called at our house and asked to see me on important business. One of them was Prince William of Wied, afterwards Mpret of Albania, who very shyly explained that they were the *Vortänzer* (superintendents of dancing!) officially selected by the Emperor to conduct social dances in Berlin, and in pursuance of their duty they had come to make arrangements for my ball!

"What!" I exclaimed, laughing. "But I have not even the pleasure of your acquaintance! It is very kind of you, but my arrangements are already made. I shall lead the *cotillon* myself with Count Franzi Magnis." Still they persisted—they were very sorry, but could not help themselves—at least they must be present and nominally carry out their duties! I was immensely amused. Such a thing could only happen in Berlin.

As they were both very nice young men and looked well in their smart uniforms, I told them they would be more than welcome as guests. With that they had to be satisfied. From that day they were counted among our best friends in young German social life. But they did not lead the *cotillon*!

The dance was preceded by a dinner of twelve. On the day before it was to take place one of the men guests failed. We were at a ball that night at the house of Countess Henkel Donnersmarck, and in

the course of it somebody brought a young man in uniform and introduced him to me. I did not catch his name, and had not the slightest idea who the officer was, but as he looked very young and gay it occurred to me that he would be suitable to take the place of the guest who had failed for our dinner of the next night. Accordingly, I asked him, if he were not otherwise engaged, to excuse short notice and take the other man's place. I thought I noticed a shade of hesitation in his acceptance, but this I attributed to some possible confusion in his mind about dates.

After the dance I told my husband that I had secured a man for the next night, and pointed him out. "Do you know who that is?" said Walter, laughing. "Not the least," I confessed. "I couldn't catch his name, but I'll ask some one presently." "I know him," said Walter, "he is Prince Joachim Albrecht of Prussia."

On the day following our entertainment another stranger was announced. This time it was no *Vortänzer*, but a severe-looking officer with fierce, upturned moustachios, who goose-stepped into my presence, clicked his heels, presented arms—no, not quite that, but went through all the antics associated with a German on parade, and then informed me that he was aide-de-camp to H.R.H. Prince Joachim Albrecht of Prussia and had called to inform me that much annoyance had been caused at Court because the Prince had come unaccompanied to our house. In future, when the Prince was invited, his aide-de-camp must be included in the invitation. I expressed regret at the oversight in this matter of etiquette, and explained how it had occurred.

I was afterwards told that this young Prince and

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his brother were notorious for their escapades in Berlin, and by the Kaiser's orders were kept under strict military discipline. The plan to keep them within bounds failed signally, for although the great iron gates of their palace in the Wilhelmstrasse were nightly bolted and barred, it was from this same palace, by the simple expedient of climbing the gates, that they escaped after dark to enjoy such dissipation as Berlin offered.

The after career of this youth, who is the second cousin of the Kaiser, was full of incident, and he probably provided the columns of the German newspapers with more scandal than did any other Hohenzollern.

His association with Marie Sulzer, an actress who played in German translations of French farces, and who was more noted for her fine physique than for fine acting, had long been subject for gossip, which was only increased when in 1906 she was married to Baron von Liebenberg. The ceremony, attended by Prince Joachim Albrecht, took place in London at the Brixton registrar's office, the bride and bridegroom separating at the door and being divorced shortly afterwards. The Prince then announced his intention of marrying the Baroness, a step which roused the Kaiser, jealous of the prestige of the House of Hohenzollern, to fury.

Marie Sulzer was expelled from Germany and went to Paris, the Prince was banished to military service in S.W. Africa. The lady accompanied him on part, at least, of his journey. In 1908, he returned without permission and married her, a step for which he was punished by being expelled from the German Army. He rejoined during the war and fought against the

Allies at Rheims, Verdun, in the Carpathians, Bukowina, and at Amiens.

Later, he was summoned by a Strassburg laundryman for non-payment of a washing bill of two hundred odd francs. But the ridicule excited by this fact fell like water from a duck's back in the case of a young man to whom notoriety was cheap at any price.

We next hear of him after the Armistice in the restaurant of the Adlon Hotel in Berlin. The band was playing that hackneyed tune (which is not, as some people suppose, the German National Anthem) "Deutschland über Alles." Two French officers, who were diners in the restaurant, went on eating, unmindful of the tune that was being played. Prince Joachim Albrecht and a few other hotheads with him chose to interpret their behaviour as an insult to Germany, making it the excuse for a violent onslaught on the offending French officers!

The indignant Allies demanded that he should be punished, and again the Prince was banished from Berlin, after the imposition of a nominal fine of 1,800 marks. But he returned a few months later, to find, to his intense mortification, that the waiters of his favourite hotel refused to serve him, a state of affairs which yielded only to the personal pleading with the proprietor of his charming second wife.

The Kaiser liked the crowd of rich, gay, young people, who for three months of the year came to relieve the dullness of Berlin.

He wanted Berlin to be so gay that people would be attracted there as they are to Paris and Brussels. I have heard him complain that the majority of German women were dowdy. "Ask your smart London friends to come here," he would laughingly

urge. "Let them teach my Court ladies how to do their hair and put on their clothes!"

All that the Kaiser could do to make Berlin more attractive he did, and certainly his Court was the most magnificent I have ever seen in either the Eastern or the Western world. As a show, it remains unsurpassed in my memory. Other Courts may have been more elegant, more refined, but for sheer weight of display Berlin easily achieved first place. The great white-painted rooms with their crystal and gold, and their countless mirrors, the throne-room with its throne, worthy of Solomon, under its magnificently ornamented dais, the *Garde du Corps* in the uniform that might have been devised for the knights of Ruritania, white breeches, shining breastplates, and great gold eagles towering, with outstretched wings, on their helmets—all these certainly made a brave show.

The ex-Kaiser was an imposing personage, handsome and haughty, carrying himself so well that he seemed taller than he actually was. He appeared always in uniform, of which he had numberless changes. I personally never remember seeing him in mufti. Nor do I remember seeing him in naval uniform, though I possess a photograph, which he gave me, showing him in a British Admiral's uniform. He signed this photograph "William"—which was a curious departure from his usual habit.

His swagger was equal to the demand made upon it by the fierce angle at which he trained his moustache.

The Empress, whose regal appearance on her visit to England in 1911 took by surprise a people accustomed to thinking of her as "dowdy," dressed magnificently on the occasion of Court ceremonies, and in her regalia looked remarkably well. Few women

could wear showy jewels more imposingly, and few had such jewels to wear as those belonging to the crown of Prussia. Beyond these State appearances she figured seldom in Berlin, and there is little to be said about her. She was always most amiable to her guests, and from what one heard was a good wife and mother.

Her sons were little more than boys when we knew them. They were kept very much in the background. Indeed, I saw them only a few times during my stay in Berlin. Princess Louise was her father's favourite child and a very spoilt one, if one may judge by the stories one heard. He loved to have her sitting by him at luncheon or dinner, and her place was always next to his no matter how exalted the guests present. It is said that she played many monkey tricks on them at table, such as mixing her father's wine with theirs, which the guests had to bear without complaint. The Emperor evidently found her antics very entertaining.

To all others the ex-Kaiser was an autocrat, exacting the most rigid discipline, the most unquestioning obedience.

A characteristic story was told me of him by a German officer of high rank.

Once when H.M. was driving in Unter den Linden, he passed my friend, who was taking the air on foot. Unfortunately, his uniform lacked a button. This the Kaiser noticed at once. He stopped his carriage, the offender was summoned to approach, and, after a severe reprimand, ordered back to his quarters. The day being fine, he decided to walk there, but as ill-luck would have it the Emperor's carriage again came round, and the eagle eye of His Majesty spotted him. For

the second time the carriage was stopped and the delinquent summoned; this time he was put under arrest, and had to serve a period of confinement to barracks for not having instantly obeyed the first order. The officer treated in this arbitrary manner was a colonel in the *Garde du Corps.*

Prussian discipline was quite incomprehensible to us. At the races, for instance, we were amused and puzzled to see officers appearing in flannels and carrying tennis rackets. I said to one, "Do tell me why you come to the races with a tennis rakcet when there is no chance of a game?" His reply was, "Because it is much too hot to wear uniform." This astonishing answer led to the further explanation that officers may only discard their uniforms to play tennis. So to escape the discomfort of tight, stiff, high-collared coats and heavy helmets in summer, they carried tennis rakcets as often as they could make a decent pretence of being about to play, and thus in case of inquiry were able to justify their appearance in flannels.

One of my pleasant Berlin memories is connected with the late Prince Hohenlohe, then Chancellor, who, though old, bent and greatly feared, could make himself most agreeable when he chose. That he "chose" in my case was very flattering to my young vanity.

I got to know him first at the house of Count Szecheni, the Austrian Ambassador, where after an interminable dinner he made his way to my side and spent the rest of the evening talking to me about all sorts of interesting things. When he rose to go he made some polite remark to the effect that he hoped he might soon have the pleasure of welcoming us at his own table!

THE KAISER
(The photo is signed in English)

"Ah, no," I laughingly replied, "not soon! For I have vowed to myself that I will never dine with you till I can have the pleasure of sitting next you, and for this honour I must wait until I am at least fifty and an Ambassadress!"

I was making chaffing allusion to the fact that as wives take the official precedence of their husbands in diplomatic circles, my place as the wife of a Second Secretary would naturally be very far from him at his table! Diplomatists, on the other hand, all take precedence of other guests.

"Not at all," he laughed, "I will arrange that—you will see!"

And, sure enough, a few days afterwards we received an invitation to dine with him. The room was already full when we entered, but to my surprise the Chancellor advanced towards me and offered me his arm.

"There!" he said, patting my hand as we went into the dining-room, "what do you think of my little *ruse*? You and your husband are the only diplomatists present, and so I can have you next me. I had to arrange it so, as you told me you would not otherwise have come!"

At the time of our stay in Berlin the greatest social figure in the capital was the English wife of Prince Henry of Pless, a German magnate holding vast estates in Southern Germany. She was young, very charming, unusually beautiful, frank and unaffected to a degree which alarmed a people accustomed from the cradle, as the Germans were, to strict ceremony and order.

But no sketch of Berlin in the early years of the century would be complete without allusion to her.

She was a child of Nature who paid no heed to established customs, but openly defied conventions and broke social rules, playing pranks with a childish naughtiness which was immensely attractive.

Naturally, as we were both English and both young, we saw a great deal of one another. When I went to see her, after the birth of her eldest boy, I was so impressed with her exquisite fairness as she lay propped up against her pillows that I told her how lovely she was looking. "Lovely!" she exclaimed, looking at her reflection in a hand-mirror. "Nonsense! just wait a moment!" Then, "Here, Ann," she called to her maid, "bring me my hair." Along came the maid with a box full of curls through which the Princess searched. "That will do," she said, dismissing the girl with the half-empty box. "Now, look at the difference," she cried, and as she spoke she triumphantly pinned the curls in place, adding a huge pink satin bow behind her ear. And indeed she was lovely, just like a big flaxen doll. At this time, when puffed-out, monstrously large coiffures were worn, almost every woman added to her tresses (they still do), yet the Princess was the only woman I knew who would have admitted it so openly.

Before private theatricals had become so much the vogue she surprised the staid Berliners by the theatrical entertainments she organized in aid of charities in which she was interested. She was helped by the fact that her brother-in-law was Comptroller of the State Theatre.

Once she was responsible for a most successful marionette show, a "Puppenfée," given in the house of her father-in-law, in which all the smart youth of Berlin appeared in the character of mechanical dolls.

I was a butterfly, I remember, and did what I considered a wonderful dance on the tips of my toes with arms extended, wearing a marvellous garment which I had been permitted to select from the wardrobe of the Imperial Opera House. Our performance was the great social event of that season, and Princess Daisy's charities benefited greatly.

When acting as hostess at her husband's country place in South Germany, her behaviour was even more unconventional than it was in Berlin. He was a great nobleman, steeped in family traditions, and liked things to be done top-notch, a taste which was not shared by his wife. She was in her own room upstairs one day when she heard the arrival of a visitor. Tiptoeing across the gallery she peeped over the railings into the hall below and saw a man standing there waiting. Instantly a practical joke suggested itself to her. She ran back into her bedroom and re-appeared a moment later with a jug of water which she emptied on the figure below. She was not in the least dismayed to find that the wrathful, spluttering man who turned up his face to see where the cold douche had come from was not the frisky young officer whom she had mistaken him for, but a neighbouring landowner of noble birth and great importance, whom she hardly knew, and who had driven over twenty miles to pay her a ceremonious call!

Her cavalier treatment of her admirers was unparalleled, though the poor creatures were usually so helplessly in love with her that they seemed to bear her no ill-will for the scorn she heaped upon them. One summer evening, when we were all gathered on the lawn, she turned to a youth and, pointing to a

chestnut tree, said pensively, "How I should like to have a chestnut off that tree! How I wish some one would get me one!"

Straightway the youth set out to satisfy her whim. He climbed the tree, ill-attired as he was for the purpose. For some moments she amused herself calling out directions to him, leading him always higher and higher, from one branch to another, all at the risk of a serious fall, until she tired of the joke, and laughingly called him back.

Discomfited and dishevelled he stood before her. Then she turned to a servant and, pointing to the foolish boy, said in her very bad German (she never acquired the language of her adopted country): "Take this gentleman to the stables. He is a donkey. Feed him well, and remember that he eats only thistles."

On another occasion we were staying at her country place when the Governor of Silesia and his wife were expected on a semi-official visit. Our host was extremely anxious that they should be received with due ceremony, and he impressed on his wife the necessity of her being at the threshold of the castle to receive them.

No sooner had he set out in his great coach, drawn by four horses, with postilions and outriders, to meet the distinguished visitors at the railway station than she announced her intention of going down to paddle in the lake. She gave orders to the servants that when they arrived the Prince and Princess should be brought down there. Tea was to be served at the lake-side. Nothing could make her change her mind, and, though we all tried to dissuade her, she insisted on dragging us all off to while away a hot afternoon by the water's edge.

The shores of the lake were pleasant, and there we stayed, even after the great coach had come rolling back bringing the visitors to the house where no hostess waited to receive them. At length we saw them on foot coming over the greensward towards us, an angry, humiliated husband, and two furious German grandees, bitterly resentful, it seemed, at the slight cast upon them. Never shall I forget the expression on the lady's face at this reception by her hostess. But nobody could be angry with Daisy for long; she was so warm-hearted and kind in spite of her thoughtlessness.

It must have been a great grief to her to have two sons fighting against us in the Great War. From some of the Prisoners of War who came to Holland from Germany I heard that she had never missed a chance of helping English prisoners when she could.

Never have I known anything so stiff and formal as Berlin "official" receptions. Nobody spoke above a whisper, and the room was sibilant with hissed consonants. I frequently had to attend these gatherings, and they were something of an ordeal to one unaccustomed to an etiquette so rigid and so complicated.

For instance, there was a distinct code of etiquette concerned with *the sofa*. Unfortunately, I committed a serious breach of this sofa etiquette at a party which we attended at our Embassy on the very day of our arrival in Berlin, when I ventured for a moment to sit down at one end of a huge settee, in the distant corner of which, talking together, sat two ladies whom I afterwards discovered were Countess Bülow, the wife of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Countess Brockdorff, the Grande Dame de la Cour.

So great a personage was the latter that a visit to her was considered equivalent to paying one's respects to the Empress in person! I was unaware of any breach of etiquette on my part in occupying that corner, till the ladies, pausing in their conversation, looked severely at me through their lorgnettes. "*Ach,*" said one to the other in her most pompous manner, "*jetzt, sind Wir drei Excellenzen auf dem Sofa!*" ("Ah! Now we are *three* Excellencies on this sofa!") I jumped up as if I had been shot, for I remembered in a flash "the etiquette of the sofa."

As a member of the British Embassy I had to pay my respects to Countess Bülow (now Princess Bülow). I found her in an immense and rather dark *salon*, presiding on a hard dining-room chair over a circle of ladies on other equally hard dining-room chairs. She sat with her back to the light. Each guest as she arrived was announced in a loud voice and was waved to the seat on the right hand of the lady presiding, where she indulged in a brief conversation on the weather and other usual topics till a new-comer was announced, in whose interest she vacated her place and took one lower!

The reception reminded one for all the world of a game of musical chairs, only without the relief of music.

My recollections of Berlin up to 1899 are very pleasant. But then the Boer War broke out and split our little circle into pro-Boers and pro-English. Alas! there were lamentably few of the latter.

After that outbreak of war "things were never the same again," as the old song says, and certainly we never felt the same to the friends we had previously thought so much of, so-called "friends,"

who, the moment war broke out, showed the cloven hoof.

Count Herbert Bismarck, the spoilt child of London, on the day when for the tenth time Mafeking was reported to have fallen, rushed round the floor of the Reichstag waving a telegram with the news, mad with joy at this great reverse to our arms. And there were many like him. The few who stuck to us at the time of that terrible chapter in our history could be reckoned on the fingers of one hand.

I remember the late Colonel Jimmy Grierson (afterwards General), who was Military Attaché at our Embassy, coming to our house one day. "I can't stand it any longer," he said. "I can never again set foot in the Club." (He had been tremendously popular with German officers, and was in the habit of taking all his meals in their company at the Club.) "The feeling is so palpably anti-British there and the rejoicing over our reverses so undisguised."

This was at that moment in the early weeks of the war when never a day passed that did not bring news of defeat somewhere. It was arranged then that he should have his knife and fork laid always at our table, and that he would come in whenever he could. He was in our house when he got his orders to resign as Military Attaché and report home for duty. How elated he was that day! He did very well in the Boer War. Years afterwards, in the Great War, he was given command of an Army Corps, but he died suddenly almost immediately after landing in France.

As defeat after defeat was reported the spirits of the Berlin populace seemed to rise higher, and whenever I went out of the house I was sure to meet some

group of Germans in riotous mood celebrating in the streets a further check to the British Army.

The kinema was then one of the newest diversions in Berlin. We took a box there one night for a little party of friends, among whom was an English girl who had come out to spend a few weeks with us. Her high spirits nearly landed us in a very tight corner.

The performance that night began with a show of the portraits of all the leading Generals in the Boer War. The Boers were received with cheers, the British with derisive hooting. Then followed the portrait of Queen Victoria, received with hisses and cat-calls. I saw my girl friend getting hotter and hotter, her eyes blazing with indignation. At length, amid a scene of wild enthusiasm, the picture of Kruger appeared on the screen. Before I could stop her my little countrywoman pushed her way to the front of the box, and, standing up there well in view of the astounded audience, she put two fingers in her mouth and, gallery-boy fashion, emitted a series of shrill whistles.

We dragged her unceremoniously to the back of the box, and as soon as we could bundled her out of the theatre, for feeling ran high in those days, and we feared an unpleasant diplomatic incident as the result of her indiscretion. She was scolded, but no reprimand, I could see, could efface the fierce joy she had felt in making her patriotic protest.

The Kaiser's attitude during the Boer War was very characteristic. It bore out the appreciation of him which a German friend of mine once wrote me in a letter after we had left Berlin:

"The Kaiser is still the same. He insists on being

the infant at the christening, the bridegroom at the marriage, and the corpse at the funeral."

The conduct of the war was a theme too tempting for him to neglect, even though his sympathies—at any rate, at moments, as when he addressed his encouraging telegram to Kruger—were pro-Boer. The war gave scope for his military genius on paper, and his tremendous interest in tactics led him to fight all our battles for us. He was continually devising plans of campaign, by which we could infallibly beat the Boer, and he would frequently make suggestions for the better conduct of our operations, asking that his criticisms might be conveyed to our Generals.

When he dined at the Embassy their supposed mistakes formed the constant theme of his discussions. He would show us just why an attack had failed and how it might have been converted into victory. He would stride up and down the room, explaining what *he* would have done had *he* been an English general. There is no doubt that, like Napoleon, he felt himself equal to winning any battle for either side just from sheer weight of military genius.

His interest in our campaign culminated in a very funny incident, the story of which was subsequently often told by Sir Frank Lascelles.

One day, one of the Embassy maidservants was busy washing the doorstep at eight o'clock in the morning, when a car drove up out of which sprang two German officers in uniform. One of them asked to see the British Ambassador, who at that early hour was still asleep. "Never mind," he said, "tell him the Emperor is here and desires to see him instantly."

The surprised housemaid summoned the butler, who rushed upstairs to rouse Sir Frank.

"What is it?" he inquired sleepily, for his habit was to work till long past midnight, and the general order was not to call him until he rang the bell. "What is it?" he growled.

"It is the Emperor," said a voice at the door, and a figure pushed past the horrified servant.

It was indeed His Majesty, who in his impatience had followed the servant up to Sir Frank's bedroom.

Our Ambassador's embarrassment can be more easily imagined than described. "Here was I," he said to me afterwards in describing the scene, "still half-asleep, unwashed, unshaved, and unfed. I had not even had my breakfast. My bedroom slippers and my dressing-gown were both out of reach. My frantic desire was to find an excuse to open my window, for I became acutely conscious that my room was stuffy. A bright idea! I offered His Majesty a cigarette. If he accepted I would get a chance of getting out of bed to find one—a man is at such a terrible disadvantage when an Emperor sits on his bed! But the Kaiser did not want to smoke. He had come to see me on very important business. He pushed me back on the pillows and advanced nearer, unfurling and placing before me a roll of documents and maps which he had brought with him. Then I realized that it was a question of yet another campaign which he had worked out. I seized the excuse of insufficient light for the study of the plans to plead for permission to get out of bed for a moment. I secured gown and slippers, pulled back the curtains and threw open the window. But the Emperor declared that I would

catch cold, and insisted on my getting back into bed before he would expose his plan of campaign."

Half an hour passed and the key to British victory was placed in Sir Frank's hands, with an earnest request that it might be instantly dispatched to London.

Then His Majesty prepared to leave. As he turned towards the door Sir Frank sprang out of bed and again possessed himself of his slippers. Standing in his pyjamas, he bowed as the Emperor passed out, but was still further discomfited to see through the open doorway a magnificent *Garde du Corps* officer in uniform, who had been waiting for his master outside.

Pointing to Sir Frank in his undiplomatic attire, the Emperor called out, "*Hier ist eine Erscheinung*" ("Here's a vision!"), and shaking hands with the Ambassador he ran down the stairs and out of the house, laughing heartily.

At last came the finale to our Berlin chapter. A stroke of luck in a double sense closed our career in that town.

One morning, Walter received a telegram from the Foreign Office, saying that there was a vacancy at the Embassy in Rome, which he could fill if he cared to leave Berlin.

After our Boer War experiences there we should not have regretted our transfer, especially to Rome, which we much wished to see. But, alas! such had been the demands made upon the Privy Purse by our stay in the German capital that not a farthing of ready cash was left in the till. To settle up accounts in Berlin, transport our household to Rome, and furnish a new home there, meant an expenditure of hundreds

of pounds—which we had not got. We talked the matter over at breakfast, studied it from every point of view, and finally decided that there was nothing for it but to decline and stay where we were.

So Walter concocted and dispatched a telegram, much regretting that important private affairs prevented him from taking advantage of the opportunity offered.

I was terribly disappointed, and after he had gone out to the Embassy sat brooding over our bad luck. Suddenly I bethought me of a possible way out.

Walter is a first-rate judge of form. He has always taken a keen interest in racing. Even that morning, when we were so depressed, he had not failed to study the week's fixtures at home, and had given it as his opinion that there were two "good things" in the near future—Ambush II for the Grand National and Sir Geoffrey for the Lincoln Handicap. I would have a double-event bet on those two horses!

There was no time to lose. The Lincoln was to be run that day.

I looked at the clock. It was twenty minutes to one. I had got twenty minutes to write out my wire and get it to the post office. "Quick!" I ordered, "a form—a pencil." Then the message:

"Fawn, double event Sir Geoffrey and Ambush II."

There! the telegram was gone.

Reaction set in after the excitement, and a great despondency settled down upon me. I had broken my promise not to bet any more and had thrown away another tenner. But, no! Luck was on my side at last. That same evening a telegram announced that Sir Geoffrey had won the Lincoln handicap.

O'Connor had accepted my bet at seventy-two to one. The double came off. O'Connor paid, and we found ourselves in funds sufficient to take us to Rome. Hey, presto! a second telegram to the F.O.:

"Urgent private affairs satisfactorily settled. Can go to Rome if post still open."

The post *was* still open. We went. So are great events settled!

We still had a few friends left after the Boer War had sifted the chaff from the grain. These we summoned to the last "Liebesmahl" ("Love-meal," as the poetic German describes the speeding of the parting guest by a dinner). We numbered twelve at this farewell dinner. We had, I remember, in addition to some moselle, a dozen bottles of champagne and about seven of port, which did not seem worth the carriage to Rome in those lucky days when champagne was within the means of us all.

These were all placed upon the table and our Prussian friends invited to drink to our next merry meeting. And right well they acquitted themselves of the task. This dinner was an eye-opener to me, who thought I knew my friends. Not a drop of that wine was left and yet they departed sober!

Their last act was to drink our healths out of their reversed helmets, after which they presented me with one of the heavy gold eagles that surmount them, as a souvenir of the occasion.

Prince Emanuel Salm Salm was one of our guests on that occasion. He was in German East Africa when the Great War broke out, on a big-game expedition with his wife. He returned at once to his country, or, rather, tried to—for we captured him on the way

and he was interned at Gibraltar. He was afterwards sent home in exchange for Colonel Gordon, V.C. But he would not fight against us, and was given a command on the Russian Front, where he was killed.

CHAPTER IV

Rome

We are transferred to Rome—The tragedy of King Humbert—I see the pagan relics of Rome with Professor Boni, and have a private audience with the Pope.

KING HUMBERT was reigning in Italy when we were transferred to Rome, but shortly after our arrival there we were horrified one morning to hear by telephone from the Embassy that he had been assassinated (July 29, 1900) in the streets of Monza.

His son, Victor Emmanuel III, the present King, succeeded him, and in a letter of mine to my mother, dated December 23, 1901, I find the following informal sketch of Queen Elena, to whom I had the honour of being presented at that time. Queen Elena, it will be remembered, is a daughter of the splendid old soldier King of Montenegro, deposed after the Great War:

"Yesterday I was received by the Queen. I found her very charming. She is a sweet and gracious lady. Her hair being very dark and her dress black—for she is still in mourning for King Humbert—she made rather a sad impression as she sat on a sofa in a large and richly furnished audience-chamber, under the portrait of the murdered King.

Perhaps it was the still recent shock of his tragic end which tinged her personality with melancholy. She spoke very affectionately of him, deploring the shortsightedness of the ruffians who had slain so good a monarch.

"Her manner changed, however, and became much happier when she spoke of her husband. She had a quite *bourgeois* conceit for his health. She said, laughingly, that he had very little time nowadays for his meals, affairs of State being so urgent, and that this perpetual hurry was very bad for him, so much so that she made a point of dawdling over breakfast every morning at least half an hour so as to keep him seated at the table for that short time."

In Italy it is the custom when a sovereign dies that his suite of apartments in the Quirinal should be closed for a certain number of years out of respect for his memory. In this way it happens that a great part of the palace is now closed owing to the deaths of Kings Victor Emmanuel II and Humbert; the Queen told me that the present Royal Family are consequently obliged to put up with very restricted accommodation. It is a curious national custom, this, to inconvenience the living out of respect for the dead.

On December 24, 1901, Queen Margherita, the beautiful Consort of the murdered king, came back to the capital for the first time since the death of her husband and took possession of the new palace which had been prepared for her.

She was adored by the people, and we watched her arrival from one of the windows of our house in the Via Veneto, which was only a stone's throw from hers. The crowd greeted her vociferously, and

she came out in her deep widow's weeds, a sad and lonely figure, to bow her acknowledgments from the balcony.

It must have been a sad home-coming to her. But it was said that her pleasure in her new house was so great that her entrance into it brought to her beautiful face the first smile that had been seen on it since the ruthless hand of a regicide had severed the current of her life as the beloved Queen of Italy.

Roman society was very gay in those days. Everybody was mad on theatricals. Victoria Colonna was the reigning beauty. Maria Mazzoleni was a charming hostess, and Jane San Faustino kept us all laughing with her original views of men and matters. Marion Crawford was busy writing his novels, and Mary Crawslay kept open house for her friends. But to my mind one of the most interesting personalities in Rome at that time was the late Professor Boni. Shortly after arriving at our new post, Walter being too hopelessly engrossed with his official duties to be able to accompany me, I sallied out early one morning to try to see something of Rome. I didn't know where I was going when I hailed an open cab, but just told the man to take me for a *giro* in *Roma antigua*. We came to the Forum, and the sight of it reminded me of old Boni, whom I had met on a former visit to the Italian capital. I at once made up my mind to call upon him to see if he would remember me. We drove up to the principal entrance of the Forum, and I told the porter at the gate that I wanted to see Cavalieri Boni himself. It wasn't yet ten o'clock, and he shook his head as much as to say, "*Do* you?" but he sold me an entrance ticket and told me how to

get to the little Farnese palace, designed by Michel Angelo, in which the Professor lived.

I got there, and my heart rather misgave me when, in answer to my timid knock, Boni himself came to the door looking unutterably bored and unutterably tired, failing also completely to recognize me as an old friend. I saw at a glance that he was hating me as another of the odious tourist breed. He took me into his study, a delightfully untidy Roman room with frescoed walls, paved floors and trestle tables littered with plans, photos, casts and geometrical instruments, and he asked me in his most tired professional manner what he could do for me. Instead of answering I exclaimed out of the fullness of my heart, "Oh, how tired you look, how awfully tired!" This seemed to arrest his attention. "*Who* did you say you were?" he asked; "*what* name did you say?" And when I told him again and reminded him of former kindnesses in the old days he suddenly remembered (or pretended he did), and pulling himself together inquired again with a semblance of interest what I particularly desired to see. "Oh, nothing," I said, "I am not a tourist. I have not come to Rome to count its stones in a given number of days, but to live here, to bask in its glorious sunshine, to imbibe the spirit of it, and little by little to learn to know it in all its moods." When I said this a complete change came over him. "Oh, then," he exclaimed, "it is the spirit of Rome you love, it is the pagan joy of it! Then would you like to see my garden with its matchless views and its classical herbs? Shall I show you Virgil's corner all full of his flowers, and the lake of blue irises, and the old wall covered with a glory of Baveno roses?" And he

reached up to a shelf for his old straw hat and took me by the hand to draw me outside into his beloved garden.

"This," he said, "is *my* hour in the day before the scientists and the tourists come down upon me, and I thought you had come to spoil it! But now I know that you will spend it with me helping me to re-clothe my pagan relics with the *terra madre* and the blossoms which bloomed here before they were even thought of! See, here are the latest remains I have unearthed. I came upon them by chance as I was pulling down a bank to make room for more flowers." And he showed me a kind of recessed arbour with tesselated pavement, built by Paul III probably with Michel Angelo's help, and in the pavement one could still see the mouths of the little lead pipes out of which water had gushed in fountains. Fancy digging in one's garden and accidentally making such a find! Am I not lucky?" commented the old Professor.

But little by little the work of his day began, and solemn-faced overseers caught us up and begged for instructions, for a word of consultation, for a signature to a plan. He seemed to forget me, and moved about from place to place in the Forum into which we had now wandered, examining the various works being carried out under his direction, giving an order here, an order there. Then suddenly he turned to me again: "If you are brave and are not afraid of darkness and steep ladders I'll take you right down under all this," he said.

So down we went together, descending a succession of extremely steep ladders into what he called the *Mundos,* some very interesting granaries and sub-

terranean chambers of the time of Romulus, and a marvellous morning I spent with him listening to an absorbing scientific lecture delivered for my sole benefit. "I have got to do all this again to-morrow morning," he said at last, "for a party of experts from one of the German Universities is coming, but it would have been a shame to take you round as the tail of a scientific comet!" and he laughed at his joke. "Come, now, and take a cup of coffee with me."

It was lunch time before I left this charming, moody, romantic old scientist to his work and his meditations amongst the stones of old Rome and the flowers of his garden. When I rose to go he stroked the sleeve of my dress. "That's pretty," he said. "Now go!" and before I was aware of his intention he kissed me lightly on the cheek, the sort of kiss an old mediæval saint might imprint upon the statue of the Madonna.

Before leaving Rome we were received in private Audience by Pope Leo XIII. Being on the staff of the British Ambassador accredited to the King, it was against etiquette for us to apply for an Audience at the Vatican until the transfer of Walter to a new post reduced us for the time being to the status of ordinary tourists. When, therefore, he was promoted First Secretary to the Legation at Peking, and the time came for us to leave Rome, we asked for and obtained an audience of his Holiness.

I had seen him the day before in one of those splendid ceremonies in St. Peter's when he was carried in state in the *Sedia*, with the two immense *flabelli* (peacock-feather fans) waved above his head, through a cheering crowd of thousands of pilgrims of all nations. It

was the occasion, if I remember rightly, of the solemn beatification of Joan of Arc. I was therefore all the more struck with the simplicity of our reception in his private study on the following day.

When we entered, the old man was seated in an arm-chair behind a large writing-table littered with papers and documents. He did not move as we advanced to kneel at his feet, except to turn towards us as, with two fingers raised, he gave us the Papal benediction. He then spoke to us for some time in French, asking interested questions concerning my husband's career and our private interests. His intellect and memory seemed as keen as ever, and his eyes were as bright as those of a child, in spite of his ninety-one years.

He was dressed in a plain white cassock with the white *pallium* about his shoulders. On his white hair rested a crimson skull-cap which, together with his low open shoes of crimson, lent a vivid splash of colour to his otherwise all-white appearance. From his neck hung a gold chain to which was attached a large amethyst cross. His face and figure were so transparent and ascetic that one felt that a breath might at any moment waft him to that Heaven to which he so evidently belonged.

When our audience was at an end, he dismissed us with a gentle wave of his hand and a simple "*Maintenant, allez, mes enfants!*"

CHAPTER V

Peking

The fascination of China—Humours of my Chinese cooks that were not always amusing—I become friendly with the famous Empress-Dowager and am admitted to the intimacy of her Palace—The pitiful little Emperor—The belated, fantastic funeral of Li Hung Chang—A lightning trip, and the bet I won of Sir Claude Macdonald.

AT the end of 1900 Walter was transferred from Rome to Peking. I am often asked which of the many countries I have lived in I prefer, but oddly enough I find it very difficult to say. I suppose, on the whole, China was the most interesting because it was thoroughly unlike any other place.

We travelled there in a German ship called the *Hamburg*, and we sailed from Naples the day before Christmas. Everything on board was solid and stodgy, passengers and food included. We used to try to relieve the tedium of the long winter evenings by "parlour games" conducted by the Chief Officer. The favourite amongst these was "musical chairs." Solemnly our Teutonic friends goose-stepped round the big dining-room. The chairs being fixed and on pivots, it was easy to cheat, and when the music stopped, a lurch of the ship could always be made responsible for the subsidence of a not unwilling Fräulein into the lap of a particularly smart young "Offizier." Before the end of the journey these fortunate incidents resulted

in several matrimonial engagements. No wonder the game was popular.

Among the passengers on board we had the Chinese Minister to Berlin and his wife and children, who were returning to Peking after four years' stay in the German capital. The father, a venerable-looking Chinaman, with horn spectacles on his nose, belonged to the old school of Chinese statesmen. Probably he knew most of the maxims of Confucius by heart and had studied the works of that sage until his own ideas had been forced into the same time-honoured groove, from which it was henceforth impossible for them to emerge. For he was hardly human. I never saw him laugh during that long voyage, though I had ample opportunities of studying him while I played with his children. His wife was, of course, invisible, the "mean thing of the inner apartments," being confined to her cabin.

The children had been taken to Europe when quite young, and, having lived there four years, had become partly Europeanized. The eldest girl was about twelve years old. She had acquired sufficient knowledge of German, picked up with a child's facility, to be able to talk fairly fluently in that language, and eagerly I extracted from her all sorts of details about her life and people.

She hardly knew China, having been so long away from it, but she told me that her name was Gundi and that it signified "Who will make way for a brother," because in China girls are not wanted, only boys, who can later on worship the manes of their fathers. Her face was pitted with smallpox; she had had this dread disease as a child.

As early as A.D. 960 inoculation for smallpox was practised in China, and then, as now, the virus was

introduced into the system by inhaling through the nostrils, instead of by puncture, as with us. Gundi told me that all Chinese babies have smallpox given to them in this way and that a great many die of it. Her feet were tiny, encased in little embroidered black satin slippers, and when I asked her if they hurt her she laughed, and for answer took me by the hand down to her mother's cabin, where, without further ceremony, she initiated me into the mysteries of Chinese foot binding, for it was being inflicted at that moment on her weeping baby sister.

It was done with narrow bandages steeped in boiling water, which were applied as hot as the tiny feet could bear them and tightly rolled. In drying, the bandages became quite hard, so that all possibility of growth was excluded.

Later on in life, when movement becomes more dignified, the loss of her "understanding" does not seem so serious a matter in a Chinese woman, who is never known to hurry, but I used to pity the poor little children. I have often seen a girl at play with her brothers upset by a twitch of her pigtail, so unstable was her centre of gravity.

We arrived in Peking early in 1902 and found Walter's delightful new chief, Sir Ernest Satow, waiting for us at the Water Gate Station. His coming so far to welcome us was all the kinder as a blinding sandstorm was raging at the time.

The atmosphere in Peking on that occasion was literally as thick and yellow, from flying dust particles, at three o'clock in the afternoon as it might have been in one of our regulation London fogs. No one who has not experienced these sandstorms can have any idea of the misery of them.

MONSEIGNEUR FAVIER
Defender of Pei tang Cathedral during the siege of 1901

I walked up to the Legation with Sir Ernest, clinging to his arm, and with bent head trying to make headway against a wall of cutting, blinding yellow dust particles. Eventually we found ourselves ringing at the front door of our new home.

The First Secretary's house, in which we lived during the whole of our stay in Peking, was one of several built for the accommodation of the Legation staff within the protecting walls of the British compound.

On those walls a tablet is now framed bearing the inscription "Lest we forget!" This was put up after the Boxer troubles by the British defenders. The marks of the attacking Chinese are still visible in the masonry, reminding one of what might have been but for the heroic defence put up by a handful of white men against the "Yellow Peril" of 1900.

I remember that when Walter was first appointed to Peking I could form no idea of our future home, but I felt a decided aversion from the thought of being surrounded by Chinese servants—I imagined they would be dirty and smelly, with repulsive hands.

Looking back, I often regret them and wish I had them now. They were the cleanest people imaginable, and the quietest in their service. They never gave the slightest trouble and never wanted an evening off! If in the course of an afternoon walk we collected a party of twelve for dinner, as we often did, we simply informed the servants of the fact when we came in, and dinner was served with credit to ourselves and without a grumble from anyone.

None of us knew how it was managed, but we imagined it to be an understood thing between all the cooks in the Legation Compound, that whoever had a

dinner to serve should have a prescriptive right to the contents of all the larders. If to-day we borrowed a couple of partridges, to-morrow we lent a leg of mutton! The matter was arranged between the servants and never troubled us. Some such system of give-and-take had to prevail in a place like Peking, where there were no shops, and everything except live stock bought in the open market had to come from one or other of the big European stores.

Our houses were comfortable enough and were run on English lines. I had some funny experiences with my Chinese servants. I was at tea once with a few chosen friends gathered together for Bridge when the door opened to admit Chang San, the blue-gowned butler, who with a very grave face advanced and stood before me.

"Must send for *daifoo* (doctor), missy," he said, "belly sick, wantchee medicine!"

"Oh! Chang San," I ejaculated, shocked at his intruding upon my guests with this allusion to a stomach trouble, apparently contracted since lunch-time, when he had seemed quite well. "Go to bed at once. I'll send *daifoo* to you," and I gently pushed him towards the door.

But he held his ground. "*My* belly no belong sick," he insisted. "Wall belly all wrong inside!" And he pointed to the electric bell, which I then realized was out of order and wanted re-charging!

The Chinese have a curious trick of adding a particle to the end of every word in English. This particle is either an "e", as in the case of the word bell, which Chang San made into belly, or "kin." We had a *mafoo* (groom) who tacked the latter on to every word in his sentence. He would talk of putting

on the "saddlekin" and taking out the "ponykin" for a "canterkin."

Nothing disturbs the equanimity of a Chinaman, and he is equal to any emergency. We were at dinner once when the servants came in and gravely informed us that Imperial bearers were without and had brought us a sturgeon as a present from the Empress-Dowager. The idea of caviare being intimately associated in our minds with the word sturgeon, we seized our knives and plates and rushed incontinently from the table to the courtyard to secure the coveted dainty, but alas! we found to our disgust that the bearers appreciated caviare as much as we did, and had been careful to remove it before handing over the fish to our servants.

After that, we took less interest in our sturgeon. Still, something had to be done about housing it. It measured over six feet in length and was frozen stiff, the season being midwinter. At first we felt embarrassed, not knowing what to do with a fish too big for the larder. But Chang San settled the difficulty for us by producing two chairs from the kitchen, on which he established the monster in the courtyard. There it remained for two days, till little by little it vanished, taken away in chunks by the friends who trooped in to call on us when they heard of our wonderful windfall, for sturgeon is as good to eat as salmon, and it was very seldom we got a taste of it in Peking.

The Chinese are good cooks, but they sometimes give one a shock. We had a dinner-party once, rather a special dinner-party, I remember, and I was anxious that all should go right, so I penetrated to the kitchen, which on principle I seldom visited, to see for myself how Liang was progressing. I approached

the fire and lifted the lid of the saucepan from which came a most appetizing odour of soup, but I dropped it with a clatter, for, to my horror, floating on the top was a large rat.

"Liang!" I cried, "what is the meaning of this?" But the Cantonese looked at me reproachfully.

"Liang wantchee dinner too!" he protested. "Missy wantchee soup; Liang wantchee rat! Rat belong Chinaman chow."

Tears stood in his beady, black eyes and I had not the heart to make him take his tit-bit out of my soup. The only alternative was to suppress that course from my menu, and I could not even have the satisfaction of telling my guests why, as it might have predisposed them against the rest of the dinner.

Sir Ernest Satow was one of the kindest of men. His career had been made chiefly in the Far East, and he cared for his Oriental studies and his old Japanese manuscripts far more than he did for entertaining, which formed part of his social duties as British Minister.

Being a bachelor and having therefore no lady to preside over his establishment, very soon after we arrived he gave me *carte blanche* to do what I liked in that way at the Legation. He was very open-handed, which made things easy.

"Do what you please," he used to say, "give what dinners and dances you like in my house; I will preside over them with pleasure, provided I am allowed to get back to my study by midnight!"

And so we arranged it. Taking him at his word, many were the invitations I sent out in his hospitable name. He used to give weekly dances, and on those occasions a special train was run from Tientsin to

enable the English girls in that town to have their share of the fun, for they thought nothing of a six-hours' journey in the train with the prospect of a dance at the end of it.

Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, also did much to liven up Peking. He gave dances generally on the night after Sir Ernest's so that the same girls, by staying over the night with their friends in Peking, could enjoy both.

Sir Robert Hart was a great "character" and a most remarkable man. Though married, with a large family living in London, he had abandoned his home ties and lived exclusively in Peking, where all his interests were. When we knew him he had been resident there for over forty years. He was the organizer and chief administrator of the Chinese Customs, over which he had been appointed Inspector-General as far back as 1861. He also took a great hand in Chinese politics and, being absolutely master of their language, could meet the officials on their own ground.

He rendered many services to his adopted country. Thus, after the Franco-Chinese War of 1882, which degenerated into a guerilla warfare lasting till 1885, Sir Robert, on behalf of the Chinese Government, successfully carried through the peace negotiations with the French.

When all had been arranged, he called at the Tszungli Yamen and, gravely addressing the assembled Ministers, said: "Nine months ago you authorized me to open negotiations for peace in your name, and now——" "The baby is born!" broke in one of the Ministers before he could proceed any farther. He used to chuckle as he told me that yarn.

At our dances we had, of course, no European band, but Sir Robert, who was passionately fond of music, had supplied the deficiency by training, with years of infinite patience, a Chinese band who played European music on European instruments—a great feat when one reflects that their own music has only five notes, that it has no sharps, flats, or naturals, and that the scale is neither major nor minor but a little of both!

We had arrived in Peking shortly after the signing of the peace Protocol between the Powers and China, allowing the Empress-Dowager and the Emperor to return to the capital from the exile into which they had been forced by the failure of the Boxer Rising. Indeed, I was fortunate enough to be present when, for the first time after her return, the Empress gave audience to the ladies of the *corps diplomatique.*

There are few more arresting figures in recent history than was Tse Hsi, the late Empress-Dowager of China, who, entering the Imperial Palace as a concubine of a former Emperor, became the despotic ruler of a great Empire. It may be imagined, then, how thrilled I was when the time came to penetrate the veil which shrouded from ordinary mortals the mysteries of the Chinese Court.

Before the approach of the great day Mrs. Conger, wife of the American Minister, called together in her capacity of "Doyenne" all the ladies of the *corps diplomatique* who were privileged to attend the Imperial Audience, and put us through a sort of dress rehearsal of the ceremonial to be pursued. She was a funny old lady, a Christian Scientist, spoken of as a possible successor to "Mother Eddy," and

great was her excitement at the prospect of the morrow. She bade us all curtsy to Her Chinese Majesty, and strongly recommended that we should all wear white embroidered under-petticoats, so that, in the event of our tripping over our feet in the performance of these curtsys, no undue display of stockinged leg should offend the susceptibilities of the surrounding Chinese dignitaries!

I left the Legation in my green official chair with four coolies in the shafts, two before and two behind, others running ahead to clear the way for "my Umptiness," for this was the ceremonial etiquette of the Celestial City. The chairs of all the other ladies converged with mine upon one of the chief dragon-decorated gateways of the palace, which formed the rendezvous of our procession. Here our official chairs were exchanged for Palace chairs upholstered in red satin, and in these we were quickly carried by Imperial bearers through numberless courtyards shaded by magnificent cedars, over canals spanned by marble bridges, past one-storied buildings roofed with Imperial yellow tiles, till we came to a flight of white marble steps, at the top of which a gorgeous group of Mandarins, Court ladies and attendants waited to conduct us to the Royal Presence.

From the glare of the blazing midday sun we passed straight into the cool atmosphere and subdued light of the Throne Room. Exactly opposite to us as we entered sat the Empress-Dowager on her throne.

I had often thought of Tse-Hsi—picturing her to myself, now as urging on her fiendish soldiers to destroy the "foreign devils"; again, disguised as a common peasant woman in blue cotton coat and pigtail, flying the vengeance of those same "devils"; again as a

sort of Buddha sitting on the floor with crossed legs and hands folded on her lap receiving the homage of her worshipping subjects. But never had I pictured her as I saw her that day.

She sat on a kind of Turkish divan covered with figured Chinese silk of a beautiful yolk-of-egg colour, her feet (which were of normal size, she being a Manchu) barely touching the ground. She wore dark trousers, loose at the ankle, and a long coat of diaphanous pale blue silk covered with delicate Chinese embroidery in a design of vine leaves and grapes. Her hair, according to the Manchu fashion, was parted in front and brushed smoothly back over the ears to the back of the head, where it was caught up and looped high over a kind of paper-cutter of beautiful green jade, set, like an Alsatian bow, crosswise on the summit of the head. The ends of this paper-cutter, which projected on both sides over the ears, were decorated with great bunches of artificial flowers, butterflies, and hanging crimson silk tassels.

As she was a widow, her cheeks were neither painted nor powdered. Her piercing brown eyes, when not looking benignly on the foreign ladies (she seemed most anxious to impress us with the friendliness of her feelings towards us, though she would willingly have eaten us up the year before!) roved inquiringly about among her surroundings, an angry gleam appearing in them if her attendants did not instantly appreciate the significance of an order or even of a gesture. Her hands were long and tapering and prettily shaped, though disfigured by the repulsive Chinese custom of letting one or two of the nails of one hand grow as long as careful cultivation would induce them to become. The nails of two fingers of the right hand

OUR CHINESE HOUSEHOLD, PEKING, 1900

were protected by gold shields, which fitted to the fingers like a thimble and gradually tapered to a point, their added length of quite four inches making her hands look strangely crab-like.

To the left of the Empress-Dowager was the Emperor, seated on a square yellow-cushioned stool with his legs dangling and his toes turned in. His real name was Tsai-Tien, but it was considered, like that of Confucius, too sacred to be spoken, or the characters to be written in common form. He was therefore known as Kwang-Hsu, or "The Illustrious Succession."

He sat with his mouth open, and his glazed eyes had a fixed expression in them which I was afterwards told was due to his opium-sodden condition. He was kept *by order* under the influence of the drug, possibly a merciful dispensation in the case of one born to such a tragic destiny. His attire in no way differed from that of the other dignitaries of his Court, except that in his case the embroidered badges on back, chest, and shoulders of his long dark silk coat were enclosed in a circle instead of in a square. He was, however, entitled to the undisputed use of a five-clawed dragon by way of ornament in these badges, whereas ordinary mortals had to be content with four-clawed monsters. A peacock feather secured in a green jade holder pointed down from the back of his Mandarin hat, which was decorated with a red silk button in the centre of the crown denoting the exalted rank of the wearer.

No notice whatever was taken of him during the day's proceedings, except that the officials and servants knelt to him, and made nine prostrations when they addressed him, nor dared they raise their eyes in so doing to the August Countenance.

When the Empress moved about from hall to hall of the Palace the Emperor followed her without speaking, a picture of perfect submission, and when she halted to address one of us, or to rest, he always took up the same position behind and to the left of her. All assertions as to his having been the originator in Reform movements of the past appeared to me ridiculous in face of his evident incapacity. There was no mistaking the fact, so plainly written on his delicate countenance, that his case was one of arrested development, and that he lived in complete subjection, mental and physical, to the tyrannical influences about him.

Standing with the other ladies in a circle which surrounded the Empress-Dowager, but occupying no more prominent position than they did, was the young Empress Yehonala, who, unlike her mother-in-law, was highly rouged and powdered, and had a vivid patch of red upon her lower lip. The Princess Imperial, adopted in her infancy by the Empress-Dowager, as also the daughters of Prince Ching, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, were likewise present.

A group of coral-robed attendants were told off in pairs to look after us, and wherever we moved they supported us under each elbow, being accustomed, I suppose, to the Southern Chinese lady of rank whose compressed feet make unassisted movement almost impossible. All these girls seemed very happy, and one whom I questioned as to what she did when not employed in her Court duties, answered, "We laugh and play." The laughing good humour and utter absence of shyness of all the ladies about the Court made intercourse with them very easy.

After we had all been presented to the Empress-Dowager she rose, telling us that we were now to be conducted through the Palace to luncheon in the banqueting hall. As the rooms in a Chinese palace are separated one from the other by open courts, we made our tour in the red chairs, the Empress going before us borne by twelve attendants in a yellow silk carrying-chair, a thirteenth holding a yellow silk umbrella over the Imperial head. In each apartment the procession paused while we admired the room and made some polite remark to the Empress through the woman interpreter. In this way we came to the Emperor's room, with dais and gilded throne on one side and an elaborate k'ang or bed-place on the other. (A Chinese bed is not unlike an oven, as it consists of a brick platform raised from the ground, under which in winter a fire is kept burning. The sleeper rests comfortably on piled cushions laid on the platform under woollen or silk coverings.) At either end of the Emperor's apartment were huge mirrors framed in carved black wood, but this room, carpetless and badly lighted by paper-covered windows placed high up in the walls, seemed to me gloomy and comfortless in the extreme.

The Empress-Dowager's room was more cheerful. It had the same kind of bed-place and a yellow silk divan. In the centre of the room stood a huge block of dark green jade elaborately carved, and on the walls were small carved Chinese brackets covered with costly bric-à-brac, enough to make the collector's mouth water. I never saw such exquisite china nor such beautifully carved pink and green jade. Round the room, tables were placed covered with what were evidently presents from foreign royalties. They

looked positively tawdry in their Chinese setting. I don't know why it is that European potentates always show such a preference for blue Sèvres when selecting a present for an Eastern ruler. Large vases, candelabra, and clocks of Sèvres china and groups of nude "biscuit" figures appear prominently in all of them.

In the Empress's collection there were clocks of every description, and she told me with pride that she had one hundred-and-sixty of them. They were all going, I noticed, but they all marked a different hour. What mattered time to a daughter of heaven!

Arrived at length in the banqueting-hall, we were met by the most curious sight of all, for down the middle of this beautiful apartment, with its painted columns and dragon-ornamented gallery, stood a long, narrow table and a row of ordinary hardwood dining-chairs, evidently "made in Germany." A white cloth was spread, but it had been covered with shiny American cloth, black, with a pattern of coloured flowers. The chairs, which had evidently been specially procured for our comfort, looked terribly out of place in their present surroundings, as did the American-cloth table cover! The centre of the table was laden with countless tall dishes of Chinese dainties, and before each place were set knife, spoon and fork of inferior metal, besides also a set of blackwood silver-mounted chopsticks. To each of us also was given a napkin (evidently hailing from Manchester) of coarse cotton, mauve in colour and adorned with squares. Neither more nor less than a duster! The fare was Chinese, but the liquor consisted of tepid beer poured into wineglasses, or champagne in liqueur glasses for those who preferred it. Later in the day we were given the napkins, chopsticks, and the dishes

out of which we had eaten, as souvenirs of the occasion.

We were now invited to "satisfy our hunger." The Empress herself set a good example by consuming several bowls of rice and milk, she using china of the Imperial yellow, while ours was yellow patterned with green and black dragons. For the Empress to eat with us was a mark of special favour, for as a rule she performed this ceremony only in private, and did not sit down to table even with her own Court ladies.

During the meal the Emperor sat as usual a little behind the Empress. No food was offered to him, but when the Empress had eaten as much of her rice as she needed she passed the half-empty bowl to him to finish. In like manner she gave him the remains of her half-sucked orange. Perhaps there was some idea in this of proving to him that the food he partook of had not been poisoned. None of us, needless to say, ate much of the Chinese fare, but after the meal we all smoked cigarettes, in which we were joined by the Emperor and Empress.

The next time I saw the Empress was in quite an unofficial way at a place called Paoting Fu, seven hours by rail from Peking, whither we had gone at the invitation of Yuan Shih Kai with the double object of visiting the university college established there by H.E., the then Viceroy of Chihli (afterwards the first President of the Chinese Republic), and of witnessing the state entry into the city of the Emperor, Empress-Dowager, and young Empress, who, together with all the Court, were returning from the annual ceremony of worshipping the remains of departed Emperors at the Western Tombs. The Court was to spend a week or more at the old Imperial Palace

perspiration streaming from his forehead I refrained from several questions and remarks I should have liked to indulge in.

Later in the afternoon the Empress-Dowager took us for a turn in the garden. She leaned upon my arm, laughing at the comparative difference in our heights, for she barely reached my shoulder. I was astonished at the beauty of the gardens, where Chinese ingenuity seemed to have reached its culminating point in the wonderfully artistic use made of existing features. For this one week's visit artificial embellishments had been liberally added to supplement Nature's deficiencies. I noted artificial rookeries, stuffed birds, squirrels and monkeys fixed on the branches of the trees, birds of rare kinds in aviaries, stuffed deer drinking at the water's edge, and stuffed ducks swimming on the miniature lake.

After drinking tea once again in a shaded pavilion, we took leave of the Empress and returned to Peking. By her orders the royal train, upholstered in pale blue satin, with plate-glass windows, was placed at my disposal for the journey. One of her chief Ministers accompanied me with instructions to return at once and report my safe arrival!

Our coming back in such state caused considerable sensation among the diplomatists, who were always on the look-out to see that one country did not steal a march on the other in the matter of Imperial favours. As luck would have it, the German Minister chanced to meet me as I passed through the Water Gate escorted by Imperial servants laden with presents (it was the invariable custom of the Chinese Court so to speed the parting guest), and not knowing the real object of my visit to Paoting Fu, he immediately

北洋大臣
袁世凱小像
奉贈
大英國夏欽
使夫人
大清光緒二十
九年花朝後
有三日識于
津沽北洋
節署

TRANSLATION

The Superintendent of Northern Trade, Yüan Shih K'ai, has the honour to present this small photograph tc the wife of the British Ambassador, 1904, the 15th day of the 2nd moon — written at T'ients'in Taku "Pei Yang Chi" Office

concluded that I had been sent there by Walter on some secret mission. A wild telegram was dispatched from Peking to Berlin that night, as I was privately informed by one of the younger diplomatists on his staff who knew how much I should be amused.

Several times after that I visited the Empress at the Summer Palace, informally and by myself. (It must be understood that I always had an interpreter with me.) Thus I was present when for the first time public opinion forced her to permit two of her Ladies-in-Waiting to appear before her in European dress. I could see how nervous and agitated she was before they came in, at this departure from precedent, and it was interesting to watch her demeanour when presently they appeared. They were dressed alike in crimson broché velvet, with European shoes on their tiny feet. They looked most awkward as they curtsied in place of kotowing. The Empress was cold at first, but curiosity overcoming her annoyance and no foreigner besides myself being present, she gradually softened towards them. Before very long she was seated on a divan between them trying a Parisian shoe on the Imperial foot.

On another occasion we were in her sleeping apartment and she invited me to sit on the *k'ang* (bed) beside her. I climbed up, and, crossing my legs in imitation of her own pose, sat there between the Empress and the Emperor. She played with my muff, and her inquiry as to why I was allowed to wear ermine when I was not a royal personage led to a talk upon the rights of the subjects in England, which very much surprised her. She told me that in China even the change from winter to summer hats was made by Royal proclamation on a date governed by the state of the weather.

She was very curious about my foreign clothes, and insisted on turning up my skirts to see what I wore underneath, showing me in turn that she herself wore a succession of coats, seven in number, all shaped exactly alike, but the inner ones less elaborately embroidered. The innermost one of all was of fine unbleached linen edged with bands of black satin.

She told me how nervous she was at night, and that she always had two slave-girls sleeping on the floor by her *k'ang* whilst others kept watch outside her door. It was a strange experience to sit there talking in this simple way to the Empress of China, and stranger still to realize that this friendly little woman with the brown face of a kindly Italian peasant was the mysterious and powerful autocrat who ruled the destinies of the largest Empire in the world, the tyrant who had deliberately debased and degraded the unfortunate Emperor sitting beside her, the fiend who had egged on the Boxers to nameless outrages!

Was she really responsible for all this, or was she only a tool in the compelling hand of Destiny?

I had an interesting experience, to which I look back with pleasure, when, late in the autumn of 1903, I went with a friend, at the invitation of Yuan Shih Kai, at that time Viceroy of Chihli, to Paoting Fu, to revisit the College or University he had established there in an attempt to impart a Western education on Western university lines to Chinese students. The college was managed by an American called Dr. Tenney, a charming and cultured man.

The Viceroy entertained us royally, sending six cooks and four servants for our use. Champagne flowed at every meal. He was a very interesting

man. I wrote at the time to a friend at home: "Yuan Shih Kai is the Chinaman of the future, and on his success or failure to maintain himself in his present exalted and powerful position depends much of the future of China. He stands almost alone for reform, progress and education. He is honest in money matters, a thing almost unknown in Chinese public life. But his enemies are many and powerful. It is to be hoped he may prevail against them. Watch his career when his name occurs, as it must, in the papers. The present time in China is intensely interesting, and her destiny is rapidly shaping itself." (An estimate of Yuan which I think it worth while to recall in view of the fact that on the death of the Empress-Dowager in 1908 he proclaimed a Republic and became its first President.)

Sir Ernest Satow went home on leave after we had been in Peking about a year, and Walter remained "in charge" of the Legation. From that time till we left Peking, all the social duties fell upon me. As men were not admitted to the presence of the Empress-Dowager, except once a year, when they were received in solemn audience, I had all "the fun of the fayre" in that quarter also.

After the departure of Sir Ernest I went even more often to the Palace. My visits, however, used to cost me rather dear, as everything of mine which the Empress admired I felt more or less bound to give her. In this way she became possessed of a beautiful lace fan, which on one occasion I carried; also of a cigarette case which attracted her very much. But in return she gave me lovely things, among others a fan which she painted for me and further adorned by a dedicatory poem to myself which she composed

and signed. She also gave me her own chopsticks of silver-mounted blackwood, and a set of the Imperial yellow dishes which she used for her meals. This was a unique present, as Chinese Court etiquette prescribes that when a Sovereign dies the whole of his rice and other bowls adorned with the royal cypher shall be broken, new ones being made for the new Emperor.

Alas! all these interesting souvenirs were burnt in the fire at Constantinople, which in 1905 destroyed not only our house, but also the whole of our varied collection of curios from many lands.

One day, the old Empress told me that she would like to try some of our European dainties. So I set my cook to work to make her a real big plum cake. I chose a recipe with lots of raisins and sultanas in it, and decorated the finished product with a wonderful fortification in pink and white sugar.

By the time it was finished it was a culinary triumph, and I sent it to the Palace by bearer, with a suitable Chinese letter, offering it to Her Majesty. Apparently she enjoyed it, for next day she sent me in return a fearsome collection of Chinese dainties set out on lovely green jade dishes.

After that we became increasingly friendly. She complained to me, at one of the audiences which she gave me, of a very bad cough, which troubled her constantly and prevented her sleeping. I told her of the great English *daifoo* (doctor) we had at the Legation, and of the wonderful cures he had effected of just such coughs! I promised to send her some of his medicine.

On my return to the Legation I explained to the doctor the nature of the royal cough, which I felt convinced was due entirely to over-smoking, and I

told him he absolutely must give me something which would effect a complete, even though temporary cure.

So he made up a wonderful mixture, in which, I think, such harmless ingredients figured as glycerine and a little opium, and we put it into a bright blue glass bottle, fixed a very smart label to it, wrapped it up in many fine wrappings and sent it off again by bearer, with a suitable complimentary epistle.

A few days later, Her Majesty sent for me again and expressed herself as highly delighted with the English doctor's medicine. She received me on that occasion in the garden of the Summer Palace, and there I was witness of an extraordinary gift she possessed, which I have, so far, never seen mentioned in print. I allude to her gift of taming birds.

On this occasion I saw her hold out a twig and softly whistle to a bird which flew down from a tree and settled on the twig. I don't know whether this particular bird was a tame one or whether the Empress could attract any little feathered songster by the magnetic power she possessed over them, but her gift was recognized and spoken of as a fact by her entourage.[1]

[1] Since writing these lines I have received a letter from a correspondent in Peking who relates the following curious experience of his which happened in Peking in 1908, and seems to suggest that this gift of bird-taming was not peculiar to the Empress, but was shared by some of her subjects who extended it even to insects. I quote from his letter:

"It was one afternoon when I was out alone in the Native City (i.e. outside the Chien-Men gate of Peking) I was looking out for the possible purchase of wooden 'gods' which I collect, and inquiries had led me to a Temple which was partly disused and turned into an incense factory. For this reason all the 'gods' had been piled up in one small room. I inquired for the head-

I cultivated the "Old Buddha's" liking for me, and in time became "Prime Favourite" among the ladies of the *corps diplomatique*, which excited some jealousy.

In the interest of diplomatic peace my husband insisted at last that I should confine myself to the more usual forms of intercourse with her, and so I had to give up the improving of an acquaintance which had promised to become increasingly memorable.

In the course of our stay in Peking I visited many Chinese ladies, the wives of the various statesmen with whom my husband carried on official business, for I liked to see them in their own homes.

I always found them very hospitable and apparently pleased to see me, though our intercourse was necessarily of a limited nature, and consisted chiefly of admiring and fingering each other's clothes! My gloves in particular were a never-failing source of amusement to them—there were no such things in China.

Sometimes the master of the house joined us, and himself did the honours of his home and wives. On these occasions they would stand respectfully round while we sat and talked.

The ceremonial form of Chinese conversation always amused me. It abounded in flowery compli-

priest and was introduced to a young man in the usual garb of a Buddhist with shaven head. We talked for some time in the little court-yard garden, when suddenly he lifted his arms up and held them out Y fashion. Quite near were two white butterflies hovering. After a few seconds the two butterflies settled on his finger-tips! I thought this must be accidental, but when he had waved them off and repeated the action time after time I was dumbfounded. The priest refused to give me any explanation of his singular powers."

ments and quaint self-depreciatory remarks, as shown by the following questions and answers which invariably passed between us, through the intermediary, of course, of the interpreter:

I: "Distinguished and aged Wu, what is your honourable age?"

He: "Alas, honourable lady, I have wasted fifty years!"

I: "How many worthy young gentleman sons have you?"

He: "My Fate is beggarly; I have but one little bug."

I: "How is Your Excellency's favoured wife?"

He: "Thank you, madam! The foolish one of the family is well."

When alluding to himself in conversation, though it may go against the grain, Chinese ideas of politeness require that a man make use of such expressions as the above, and speaking of his family, he is bound to qualify them as "little," "mean," "stupid," and "cheap." Rather hard on the poor family! (Curiously enough, in the same way in Persia, the most exalted personage, in conversation with another, will always allude to himself as "Bandeh"—slave.)

Prince Chu'un was the late Emperor's brother. After the Boxer troubles he was designated, in the Peace Protocol between the Plenipotentiaries of Foreign Powers and China, to go on an expiatory mission to Berlin to beg forgiveness for the murder of Baron von Kettler, who was shot in his official "chair" when on his way in uniform to the Tszungli Yamen (Chinese Foreign Office).

A memorial arch was later erected in Peking to the memory of the deceased diplomatist, and an inscription

was engraved upon it in Latin, German and Chinese, stating the treacherous circumstances under which he had met his death.

Soon after we arrived in Peking the day was fixed for unveiling this memorial, and by way of punishment Prince Chu'un was again chosen, as the prince nearest to the throne, to perform the humiliating ceremony of pouring libations over it and kotowing before it in the name of the Chinese Government.

He "saved his face," however, in a masterly way, by performing his duty in so slipshod and careless a manner that the ceremony was robbed of all dignity and impressiveness.

No arrangements had been made by the Chinese authorities for the accommodation of the various Foreign Ministers and their staffs, so that to approach the monument we all had to thread our way through a hostile and dirty Chinese crowd.

Whether intentionally or not, Prince Chu'un's fulfilment of his penance turned out to be rather an added insult than an atonement for a crime.

The summer months, which were intolerably hot in Peking, we used to spend travelling on horseback in the Northern Provinces or vegetating in one of the delightful little Chinese yamens attached to the temples which the priests were sometimes persuaded to let for the season to foreign diplomats.

Thus we idled away one summer in the courts of the Temple of Sweet Smells, which we had converted to our use by the addition of a few sticks of furniture, the ubiquitous mosquito nets, and our kitchen pots and pans brought up in carts from the Legation.

Our quarters were certainly not luxurious, but they had the merit of being extremely picturesque. Our

TUNG FU-HSIANG
The Leader of the Boxers in 1900

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Chinese servants did wonders with the poor resources at hand. The *chef* cooked on a mud stove with three holes in it, and not a bit of iron in its composition. He never complained, and I often wished some of our fastidious English cooks could have tried their hands at producing a dinner on his range.

From a packet of letters addressed to my mother from China, which after her death I found put aside by her loving hands, I take the following description of this picturesque place:

"I wish you could change places with me for a moment and see the prospect stretched out before me; I am watching the changing lights on the distant hills. They remind me in some ways of the Alban Hills, and really the two landscapes have much in common.

"At a distance the Chinese labourer in the field might easily be mistaken in his blue gown for an Italian peasant. This country is cultivated for miles all round, and as our temple is perched on the crown of a hill we overlook great stretches of it. When Walter rides off to his daily work in Peking and, as often happens, leaves me to spend a restful day by myself, I spend much time watching my poor, patient neighbours at their work.

"The first thing that strikes one is that the whole world is kin! I see Chinese children playing just the same games as our little street urchins play, rolling in the dust or making mud-pies, according to the weather, chasing each other and chucking coins in the traditional way, all to the accompaniment of the same laughter and shouting, and interrupted by the same disputes, ending in the same tears, followed by the same punishments.

"Such a sad little story came to my knowledge the other day. From my usual post on the verandah I saw a funeral procession wending its slow way through the fields to a little burial-place close by. I asked the 'boy' (Chinese manservant) who was being buried, and he told me it was a little girl of eleven years of age who had been stolen by a neighbour and secretly taken to Peking to be sold as a slave.

"But people were too prudent to buy a girl who evidently was not his and of whom he could give no good account; so, after days of wandering about with her and finding at last that he could not get her off his hands, not daring either to return with her to the village whence he had stolen her, he murdered her by throwing her down a well.

"Her body was not found till days after, when the man had coolly returned to live in his cabin near her father's. The crime, however, was brought home to him, and I hope he suffered for it.

"Selling girls as slaves is not at all an uncommon thing here. They are bought as servants and domestic drudges. In many cases they are well treated, and if they give satisfaction, are often selected as concubines for the sons of the house. I have seen several in the houses of Chinese ladies where I have visited, and they didn't strike me as looking more unhappy than their more fortunate sisters."

After months of brazen sunshine, that summer came to a sudden end, and torrential rain drove us from our temple. For days and nights on end the heavens discharged their floods. I realized then that I had never seen real rain before. For it didn't fall as at home, in gentle, refreshing showers, but

pelted in sheets and with a noise like the rattle of artillery, so that one had to raise one's voice to make oneself heard above it.

And having before suffered from parched and sun-dried skin and warped furniture, one was suddenly afflicted with a penetrating moisture that made one's very boots mildewed in a night and swelled the drawers of tables and chests so that they would neither open nor shut.

But the Emperor had been in State to the Temple of Heaven to pray for this rain, so doubtless all good Chinamen were satisfied at this answer to his prayer. Anyhow, we were not long in packing up our few things and returning to Peking.

The funeral of Li-Hung-Chang [1] took place while we were in Peking nearly two years after his death, and by a curious coincidence we had a very intimate view of it. We were riding one day, Walter and I, in rather a remote part of Peking, when in passing a large Yamen we heard the most appalling noises of sobbing and crying.

We inquired of the *mafoo* (groom) riding behind us what this might mean, and he gave us the astounding

[1] That eminent Chinese statesman was born in 1823, a century ago. From his earliest youth he showed marked ability, and his undoubted qualities both as a soldier and statesman led him step by step to the highest positions in his country. In 1896 he came to Europe to represent his Imperial Mistress at the coronation of the Czar. Later he visited Germany, Belgium, France, England and the United States, where he caused the greatest sensation by appearing in the streets in the striking national dress of a mandarin of the highest degree.

He wore the yellow jacket and peacock feather which since have become so familiar to us in "Chu Chin Chow." He died in 1901 after imprudently partaking of a large quantity of dough cakes, of which Chinese dainty he was extremely fond.

answer that within that house the funeral party of the famous Chinese statesman was in progress.

I was seized with an irresistible desire to witness so strange a sight, and Walter, yielding to my entreaty, sent in a message to say that the English Ur-Chinchai (Second Envoy) and his wife had come to pay their respects to the dead.

In China people are not buried when they die, but have to wait for an auspicious day determined upon after much searching of mind by certain astrologers called in by the family. Thus it happened that, although Li-Hung-Chang had died in November, 1901, he could not be buried till May, 1903.

We were received by the chief mourner, his son, who appeared to be in a state of abject grief. He was (as custom prescribed) unshaven and unwashed, and wore a most unbecoming, ill-fitting and dirty garment of sackcloth.

Li's coffin was concealed from the public gaze behind a curtain at the back of an altar upon which were set out a most beautiful set of Ming Cloisonné vases. Incense was burning on this altar, which was draped in white, as was the whole of the funeral chamber.

The four chief mourners, clothed in white, were ranged on either side of this altar, in front of which were placed three cushions. Two of them were uncovered, but a silken wrapper was thrown over the centre one, which was removed when a specially great mandarin came to "kotow," which he did first to the invisible coffin and afterwards to each of the watching mourners, who returned the salute in customary Chinese fashion by raising their joined hands to their foreheads, with which they afterwards touched the floor.

On leaving the "presence" (we shook hands with the chief mourners), we were conducted through an outer hall draped in white, the light of the windows being subdued, and here tea and sweetmeats were handed about by retainers. At the outer door stood two sentries, who presented arms as we passed out.

In the court-yard were arranged a whole menagerie of weird cardboard beasts, more than life-size, whose coats and plumage were represented by dried fir-twigs stuck on—I noticed an immense and most comically-shaped "Pekingese" dog among others.

There were also a regiment of life-sized horses, constructed on light bamboo frames covered with paper, and coloured to imitate life. Each one was mounted by a cardboard Chinaman in correct official dress, with hat, boots and pigtail complete. These stuffed cavaliers, in their coloured paper garments, appeared so lifelike at a distance, as almost to deceive one.

Looked at closely, however, it was impossible not to laugh at the fixed expressions of man and beast. The comic side of them was still further accentuated when presently they were bodily hoisted up and carried away, topsy-turvy, with the horses' legs sticking in the air, to the place of their execution, for all were burnt in the evening in order that the deceased statesman might have the use of them in the spirit world to which he was supposed to have retired.

In the same way were sent after him the effigies of his servants, Peking carts, family shrines, official chairs, and wives.

On the following morning, we saw the funeral

procession start through the streets of Peking on its last long journey to the province of An Hui, where Li-Hung-Chang was to be finally laid to rest in the family tomb, for it is customary in China to return at the last to the place where one first saw the light.

The streets were lined with troops standing shoulder to shoulder. The *cortège* consisted of life-sized cardboard representations of horsemen, animals, carriages and servants similar to those burnt on the previous night, carried aloft on men's shoulders.

Then came numberless coolies carrying red umbrellas opened, and red signboards, on which were set out in great gold characters the names and virtues of the departed.

After these appeared the chief mourner, walking alone under a white canopy supported by eight men. Immediately behind him clustered a white group of secondary mourners, and behind these again were the wives and female relations peeping between the blinds of the white Sedan chairs in which they were hidden.

At last came the funeral-car itself, huge and gorgeous, an immense catafalque covered with red and gold trappings and carried upon the shoulders of no fewer than 48 white-clad bearers.

The bier was followed by live chargers led by grooms, and then came a multitude of retainers dressed most quaintly in apple-green coats studded with white spots as large as half-crowns. The procession was closed by a number of Peking carts and Sedan chairs all draped in white.

Dotted along the whole line of the straggling procession were musicians and hired mourners, who played doleful notes on discordant wind instruments,

hammered upon brass gongs, or drew the weirdest boo-hoos from huge, sobbing pumps shaped like gigantic garden syringes. Largesse, in the shape of cardboard coins of gold and silver, was distributed along the whole route.

And all the time the dust flew in clouds and the sun beat fiercely down upon the heads of the gaping crowds, while the smell of Peking filled the nostrils, that awful smell of combined dirt and opium!

I went to Tokio one summer to stay at the Legation with Sir Claude and Lady Macdonald. There was a funny ending to my trip, for I was under orders from Walter to be back in Peking on a certain date, as we had accepted an invitation from the United States Legation to a dinner to be given in honour of "Fighting Bob Evans," the well-known American admiral, who was in Chinese waters with a squadron.

I decided to sail in a Japanese ship. "You'll miss your dinner," warned Sir Claude. "I bet you five pounds I don't," I answered, laughing. "Done with you," said Sir Claude. "I'll take on the bet."

Next day I departed with my maid. But as ill-luck would have it, a horrid typhoon came up, and the little Japanese captain sought shelter, as is usual in such cases, under the lee of an island. We thus lost twelve precious hours. When we got to Chefoo, I begged him to make up time by cutting short his stay in that port, but he declared that he had merchandize to land and to load which would make this quite impossible.

My bet was lost if I could not find a way of avoiding this delay. But I intended to win it at all costs. So I told my maid to stick to the ship with my luggage,

and I went ashore to see if I could not find another vessel starting that very moment for the Taku Forts (where we took train for Peking).

I took just enough luggage in a handbag to last me a few days and went to the British Consul's house, where I made myself known and begged for help. The Consul entered thoroughly into the spirit of the joke. "I know of no ship sailing from this port this morning," he said, "except one—an old P. and O. tramp steamer, which I believe is due to sail at two o'clock. But she carries no passengers, and, indeed, has no decent accommodation for such." "Never mind," I said, "introduce me to the captain and let's see if we can't persuade him to take me."

The captain proved to be a delightful old boy, and he readily promised to do the best he could for me, so that, before an hour had passed, I found myself again on the high seas. My only companions besides the captain and his crew were two "travellers" in celluloid collars, but we all dined together and they possessed a fund of anecdotes which made the evening pass very quickly.

We were supposed to arrive off the "bar" at the Taku Forts at six in the morning. From there, after crossing the bar in a small, flat-bottomed boat, a short trip up the river to the Taku Forts would land me near the station, where I would take train for Peking. The only train left daily at one o'clock and the journey to the capital lasted about six hours, so that I flattered myself I could just manage to arrive in time to win my bet.

I went to bed quite happy. But "l'homme propose et Dieu dispose!" When I came up on deck next morning a howling storm of yellow sand was blowing

—one of those storms in which all vision is cut off—as in a London yellow fog—by a solid wall of golden dust, the minute particles of which are absolutely blinding.

I saw my hopes of success dashed at the last moment, and I implored the captain to help me. Was there nothing I could attempt to land in? Nothing, he said, except one of the tiny little flat-bottomed barges of the Taku Tug and Lighter Company, one of which he had seen a moment before when the veil of dust had parted for a moment.

At my earnest entreaty he consented at last to hail one. The storm was abating, though the wind still blew strongly. A moment later the barge, only a few feet long and manned by three Chinamen, came in sight, and caught a rope which he threw out. The captain told me to be ready to jump when he gave me the signal, and when a huge wave raised the barge to a sufficient height and the captain said "Go!" I went, and by the greatest luck landed easily and well on the little ship's deck.

We rapidly lost sight of the larger vessel. There was a good deal of shipping waiting to cross the bar, and as we passed under the bows of a huge man-of-war, a white figured hurtled through the air and alighted on its feet by my side.

This proved to be an engine-hand of Admiral Evans' flagship! He told me he had got two days' leave, and, like myself, desired very much to land, but until we passed under the bows of his ship he had seen no prospect of being able to satisfy that wish. He hoped I was not annoyed at his forcing his company on me in that way! I was destined to be very glad of such a companion, for while we were talking

we had been drifting nearer and nearer to "the bar"! We soon knew we were on it, for the shallow wind-driven water passing over it left us high and dry every now and then, causing us to bump ominously on the sand.

Suddenly a terrific rending sound brought terror into the situation. My friend the engine-hand put a brave face on it. "Keep calm," he said, "while I try to find out what has happened." He went, and returned to my side in a few moments. "The very worst has occurred," he said. "The rudder chain has somehow got loose and become entangled in the propeller; we can't move one way or the other." "What will happen?" I asked, with a voice which I tried to make unconcerned. "One of two things," my companion answered. "Either we shall go to pieces here on the bar, or a wave may float us, in which case we should drift back on the wind to the ships we have left, which are only about two miles off."

We sat and waited, the waves washing right over us. But luck was on our side. The Chinese are the most ingenious people in the world. They got to work at once and a shout of triumph soon announced their success. We heard the welcome sound of the propeller turning once more. With an axe they had hacked in two the chain which entangled the rudder.

We crossed the bar, caught the train, and arrived in Peking. We had even time, my Yankee friend and I, to enjoy a meal of ham and eggs, which was served to us at a little round table on the platform of the Taku station. I saw a group of smart naval officers at the other end of the platform, who, my

friend told me, were the American Admiral and his staff going to Peking.

Arrived there, I told Walter the story of my adventures and how I had won my bet! I jumped into evening dress and got to the American Legation in time for the gala dinner. As I shook hands with the Admiral he started back in amazement. "Why, Lady Susan," he said, "aren't you the lady I saw at the Taku station this morning? What in the world were you doing there having luncheon with one of the engine-room hands of my flagship?" I explained the matter, and my story was received with cheers and much laughter.

I won my bet and Sir Claude paid up like a man!

I find in a letter received from Peking in 1908 (some years after we had left there) the following words: "There is a great deal of unrest in China. A spark would kindle a conflagration which might easily set the country afire and end in an upset of the existing system. There is discord between the leaders of the opposition to the old Empress's government. A Grand Council is shortly to be held, at which she and her Ministers will discuss many questions, chief among them being the selection of an heir to the throne, Kwang Hsu being childless."

The necessity for this selection arose from the fact that according to Chinese law, sacrifices have to be performed every year at a fixed season at the Imperial tombs, on which occasion each "tablet" of the Sacred Ancestors is honoured by the ceremony known as "kotowing." Etiquette forbids that this ceremony should be performed by one of the same generation as the deceased. Thus, when the Emperor

Tung Chih died of smallpox at the age of seventeen, his mother, the Empress-Dowager, chose to ignore the fact that his consort, Ah-lu-te, was *enceinte*, and therefore might soon confer an heir on the deceased sovereign, who would worship his manes according to the prescribed Chinese law.

Secretly intending to retain, at all cost, the power she had wielded for so long, immediately upon the death of her son she sent off a strong detachment of Household troops to the residence of Prince Chun, who had married her younger sister, with orders to bring back to Peking, in an Imperial yellow chair, his infant son.

This child she caused to be proclaimed Emperor under the name of Kwang Hsu, she herself assuming the Regency in his name.

A difficulty now arose from the fact that Kwang Hsu was of the same generation as Tung Chih, and therefore could not worship at his predecessor's tomb.

But Tse Hsi was not to be defeated by so trifling a difficulty. She caused a decree to be published by which it was announced that as soon as a son should be born to Kwang Hsu the child should be proclaimed the posthumously adopted son of Tung Chih, so that it might be in a position to worship his manes.

But alas for man's interferences with the designs of Providence! Kwang Hsu remained childless. This circumstance proved his ruin, for it was made the ground for his enforced abdication in 1898, at the bidding of his masterful aunt, who then resumed the reins of government which she had relinquished for a short time when the Emperor came of age,

but which she held from that time till the day of her death.

The question of an heir to the throne remained unsettled until the "Old Buddha" took the matter into her own hands and settled it in favour of a young kinsman of hers called Prince Pu Chun, who was suitable from the manes-worshipping point of view, being of a younger generation than Kwang Hsu.

Prince Pu Chun was the son of Prince Tuan, afterwards leader of the Boxer movement. In January, 1898, Kwang Hsu, at the instigation of the Empress-Dowager, issued a Vermilion Decree, formally appointing him Ta-A-Ko, or Heir Apparent.

This boy was in Peking when we first arrived there, and was being brought up at the Court with a view to the position which it was intended he should ultimately occupy. But he was a detestable youth, violent-tempered, coarse-featured and rude-mannered. He played his cards very badly with the autocratic old Empress.

One day he dressed himself up as a Boxer, and played at being one with the eunuchs in the courtyard of her palace. She saw him from a distance, and sending for his father, reproached him bitterly for allowing his son to behave in so unseemly a manner.

Another time he is said to have smacked the young Emperor's face, calling him a devil's spawn. This outrageous insult to the person of the Son of Heaven, whom common mortals were not even supposed to look at without shading their eyes, so incensed the old Empress that she condemned the offender to twenty strokes of the whip.

There is little doubt that the Empress-Dowager

secretly encouraged the Boxer movement, and there were days, no doubt, when she was frantic at the slow march of events intended to culminate in the destruction of the "foreign devils."

It is said that at that time the edges of the royal temper were very frayed, and that the young Heir Apparent often got the benefit of it.

Just before the Boxer rising he seemed to be heading straight for disaster. From being an expectant Emperor it looked as if he might easily become a deposed Heir Apparent.

And so it eventually happened. For when it was desired to re-establish cordial relations between the Court and the Legation it was realized that this could not possibly be achieved while the son of the notorious Boxer leader, Prince Tuan, remained heir to the throne.

The Empress was not hard to persuade on this point, for she was quite willing to rid herself of the uncouth and ungrateful boy, who more than once had brought her to shame by his disgraceful conduct. So she decided to juggle once more with the laws of succession, and in 1900 promulgated a decree cancelling Pu Chun's title as heir to the throne and conferring upon him in exchange the rank of an imperial duke of the lowest grade.

This worthless youth took his dismissal with perfect composure. He disappeared from the public stage and sank from view into the lowest society of the capital.

After his disgrace, the question of the selection of an heir to the throne remained in abeyance until 1908, when, as my friend wrote to me, it became once more urgent, the cause being the increasing infirmities

of the old Empress, who began to feel the approach of her own death, and knew that that of her miserable puppet, Kwang Hsu, might be hourly looked for.

In that year she suddenly announced the time to have arrived for the nomination of an heir to the Emperor Tung Chih. She decreed that the infant son of Prince Chun, brother of Kwang Hsu, should be heir to the throne, and should perform joint sacrifices at the shrines of both Emperors.

Thus to the very end did this remarkable woman pull the strings and arrange matters to suit herself.

But with her death, which occurred in November, 1908, when the country lost her strong hand of guidance, the fabric which she had held together in her iron grasp crumbled. A revolution broke out almost immediately, headed by Yuan Shih Kai, who proclaimed himself First President of the Republic of China.

The child selected by the old Empress-Dowager to succeed her remained a prisoner in the palace. We have lately heard that his mother committed suicide by opium poisoning, after a severe quarrel with the widow of Kwang Hsu, who had been appointed by the dying Empress to succeed her as Empress-Dowager, and who took herself very seriously as such.

Both ladies, it appears, had their own ideas on the subject of the young Emperor's marriage, for each one had a particular Manchu beauty in view for the boy. But he had ideas of his own on the subject, and he preferred yet another!

The Empress-Dowager, taking a leaf from the "Old Buddha's" book, was determined to have her own way. She notified the recalcitrant Prince that his marriage was a question for the decision

of the Imperial Court, and that he must abide by its wishes.

This led to bitter words between them. Prince and Princess Chun were summoned to recall their son to a proper notion of his duty. But the Princess took her boy's part, with the result that a serious breach occurred between her and the Empress. A few days later she died, and it was rumoured that she had committed suicide.

The boy Emperor, who is now sixteen, is said to be looking for an opportunity to assert his authority against that of the Dowager-Empress. It will be interesting to see what further part he takes in the history of his country, and if he ever attempts to upset the existing Republic, and to restore the great Empire of which he was the figure-head for such a brief spell after the death of Tse Hsi.

CHAPTER VI

An Interlude

AFTER leaving Peking we were in London for some months "on leave." It was just before the Russo-Japanese War broke out, and King Edward sent for Walter and questioned him closely concerning Far Eastern problems.

In the course of the next generation or two, when sufficient time has elapsed for historians to be able properly to focus his period, it will be realized, more even than now, how very able a monarch King Edward was, and how much he did for his country, not only during his all too short reign, but during those many years when, as Prince of Wales, he exerted his remarkable influence upon the world.

Not the least of his strong points was his capacity for sizing up a situation and foreseeing the consequences that might arise from it. On this occasion Walter was much struck by the grasp which he had of the Russo-Japanese question. He was most anxious to hear the minutest details bearing upon the threatened war.

These Walter could give him, and they had a long talk concerning the attitude of Russia in the burning question of the evacuation of Manchuria. The Russians had time and again promised that it should be effected by November 18, 1903, at least,

that was the last date fixed after many postponements, but they had no intention of fulfilling their pledge, for they secretly despised the Japanese and never believed they would fight on such a question. However, we had formed a very different opinion in Peking, based on what we had seen there.

The Japanese and Russian Legations flanked the main canal of Peking on opposite sides of the stream. Each had a strong guard of soldiers, for hardly two years had elapsed since the Boxer rising. Every evening at sundown as we walked along the canal bank, which was one of the few possible walks in the Chinese capital, we were struck by hearing from the Russian side their beautiful evening prayer, sung by the troops in unison. From the Japanese side came only frantic shrieks of "banzai." The little yellow troops were preparing for battle while the Russians prayed, and Walter would turn to me and say: "The Russians are sleeping on the edge of a volcano; they are deliberately adopting an ostrich policy of not seeing more than they wish to."

We used to dance a lot in Peking in the various European Legations, and I remember observing to one of the Russian secretaries that the time was getting short for their evacuation of Manchuria. "The 18th of November is not far off!" I remarked. "Oh, we shan't evacuate," he said; "that's all bluff!" "But," I argued, shocked at his flippancy, "Russia has pledged her word of honour!" We were speaking in French, and his answer has always remained in my mind. "Madame, la Russie n'a pas de parole d'honneur, et n'en a pas besoin!" And, of course, he was quite right; the date came and passed, and still no evacuation occurred, and to all

with eyes to see it became patent that sooner or later this question, so vital to Tokio, would develop into one of peace or war between the two countries.

We went at the end of 1903 to Port Arthur to see for ourselves what was going on there. Admiral Alexeiew, the Russian Viceroy of the province in dispute, was in residence at the port. We stayed for several days at the hotel, using ears and eyes to the best advantage, and our visit proved to be most informative, for on Alexeiew's staff were two old friends of ours, Monsieur Plancon, Political Adviser to the Viceroy, and General Wogack, Military Attaché to the Russian Legation in Peking and Tokio, one of the handsomest men in Europe, who afterwards came to be well known in London. These two friends introduced us to the Viceroy, and so organized our visit that we were able to see everything of interest that was going on in that port.

To serious-minded people the Russians really seemed to be playing with explosives. They wilfully ignored the war preparations of the Japanese, which were patent to the eye of the veriest tyro. An English merchant in Port Arthur took us round and showed us the gun emplacements of the Russians, which he said had been accurately charted by the Japanese. He told us that there were about 600 Japanese barbers and waiters in the town who were well-known to be soldier spies. He declared that the Japanese in the hinterland of the port had secret dumps everywhere of munitions and provisions, ready for the use of their armies when the time came.

Their war preparations were in an advanced stage, and all the time Russia was "fiddling," and Russian graft in the port was rampant. Our Russian friends

showed us with pride the bunker coal stacked on the wharves round the port—all Cardiff, they declared; but the English merchant whispered that in reality they were Cardiff only on the *outside* of the piles, the inside being cheap Japanese stuff, the difference in the price lining the pockets of those responsible for the purchase. We saw case upon case of something piled up all round the port, and on inquiry elicited the interesting fact that those cases contained "vodka" for the Russian troops!

Alexeiew was a charming man, and, I must say, most kind and hospitable. He entertained us in his beautiful house, the windows of which looked out on the port, which is circular in shape with only one exit to the sea, that exit being flanked by high walls of rock and so narrow that a chain thrown across it could practically bar the entrance to ships.

This port, it will be remembered, played a great part in the subsequent Russo-Japanese War, for the Japanese opened hostilities by a terrific bombardment of it without warning.

We were lunching one day at the Viceroy's table and looking out at the busy scene of moving shipping in the port. "Why won't Russia adopt our English principle of Free Trade?" I asked, alluding to the real bone of contention between Russia and Japan. "We have done so," answered the Viceroy. "Look out of that window; don't you see the flags of all nations flying on the shipping?" "Yes, I do," I answered, following the direction of his glance, "but tell me, *how often* do Russian ships pay dues on entering the port?" "The first time only," he replied. "And the foreign shipping?" I persisted. "Ah! every time they enter," he admitted. "There

you have it!" I said. "That is not England's or Japan's idea of a free port!"

Many details of this kind Walter told King Edward, who listened with attention. "Then why," he said at last, "do Sir Charles Scott (then our Ambassador in Russia), the Foreign Office, and the City tell me there will be no war? Have you seen Lord Lansdowne?" Walter said "Yes," but the King insisted: "Then go back to the Foreign Office and see him again, and tell him what you have told me, with all the details you have put before me in confirmation of your views."

Walter did as he was bid, but he was not again admitted to the presence of the Foreign Minister. He delivered his message to the Private Secretary, which may or may not have been passed on. Anyhow, he was not questioned further upon what he knew, or professed to know.

As luck would have it, we met King Edward at a private dinner on February 8, 1904—the very day when Port Arthur was bombarded by the Japanese. The King pulled out of his pocket a telegram announcing the event, which he had received just before coming to dinner. He passed it down the table to Walter, remarking as he did so: "This means war with Russia. You were right, after all!"

CHAPTER VII

Constantinople

Constantinople from within—Abdul Hamid, the little wizened old despot, his subtle cruelties and cowardice in private and public life—The secrets of the harem, and the bitter cry of the Turkish women.

A QUICK turn of the wheel of fortune, guided by the Foreign Office, wafted us in 1903 from Peking to Constantinople, from the Court of the Old Buddha to the Selamlik of the Tyrant of Islam.

I remember with what interest I found myself in the presence of Abdul Hamid, the ex-Kaiser's friend, the cruel despot who, in a reign of thirty-three years (he was deposed and imprisoned in 1908), was never so happy as when oppressing his subjects.

He was a little wizened old man with a keen, intelligent face and piercing dark eyes. He wore undress uniform and an ordinary fez with a black tassel depending from it. He always stood when receiving European representatives and their wives after the Friday Selamlik, and on these occasions manœuvred so that no one should pass behind him. I suppose he always had an instinctive fear of an assassin's dagger.

This stooping, cringing "shadow of God" was a strange mixture of physical cowardice and so-called diplomacy. Having reached the throne after a series of harem tragedies calculated to make him for ever

fearful for his own safety, he was surrounded always by an army of spies who reported to him daily the sayings and doings of his entourage. It is said that even when the end of his career came in 1908, and the deputation from Parliament arrived at Yildiz Kiosk to announce to him his deposition in favour of his brother, he received them trembling and weak-kneed. With tearful voice he begged that his life at least might be spared. Even as he spoke his treacherous hand caressed in his pocket the revolver he always carried but was too cowardly to use!

His political methods were underhand yet marked by a curious political astuteness. His motto was *divide et impera*, as far as Europe was concerned. He always played off one country against another, and he was clever enough to realize that "sick" as Turkey was, it yet could not be allowed to disappear as a political entity. That he was right in this judgment the Peace of Versailles has once more proved. Whatever else goes, Turkey in Europe will remain! In the early days of his reign he was a puppet in the hands of his powerful Minister, Midhat Pasha, an illiterate but capable soldier who had just made his mark as Vali of Baghdad under Abdul Aziz. But the policy of this statesman, which was, nominally at least, one of equality for Mussulman and Christian, did not suit Abdul Hamid, who dreamed of restoring the former absolute power of Turkey by gradually eliminating where possible European and Christian influence and accentuating the Turkish and Mohammedan character of the Ottoman Empire. His methods to this end were drastic and Oriental. They included the removal of obstacles to it, such as Midhat, by private assassination, or, as in the case

of the Armenians, by massacre *en masse*. Midhat was one of his first victims, but he was followed by hundreds of others. Thousands yearly fled the country to avoid the almost equally undesirable fate of official banishment. Thus, little by little, Abdul Hamid acquired undisputed power.

He made concessions to Europe (when he couldn't do otherwise) and wherever the Turkish element was in a minority. In Asiatic Turkey he likewise kept before his eyes his ultimate aim of consolidating and extending his influence.

Contemptible as was his private life, this profligate sovereign did not hesitate to use his position of Caliph to further his ambitious ends. He played upon the religious sentiments of his Mohammedan subjects, and as the official guardian of their holy places tried to conciliate the Arabs of the Hedjaz and Yemen by building the Hedjaz railway. He failed, however, to quell the constant revolts of those tribes against his Government.

This Hedjaz railway was destined to play an important political part. The ex-Emperor William, looking for an economic outlet for the surplus population of Germany, cast covetous eyes in the direction of the "Sultan Massacreur's" Asiatic possessions, and set to work by personal influence to flatter him into the yielding of substantial concessions to the friendly German Empire. In 1889 he paid the Sultan his first visit. Then in 1898 he made a pilgrimage to Damascus, and there, after the theatrical laying of a cross upon the tomb of Saladin, proclaimed himself "for ever" protector of the Moslem world. Meanwhile his able Ambassador in Constantinople, Count Marshal von Bieberstein, was forwarding

COUNT MARSHAL VON BIEBERSTEIN

his Emperor's interests by flattering the young Turks with visions of a Baghdad railway and potential riches in the Mesopotamian basin and Iranian plateau. As early as 1885 the Turks had played the English false, and the Germans had scored over us by getting the Porte to violate in their favour the lease granted to a British Company to build a railway from Ismidt to Haidar Pasha. This line subsequently became the Anatolian railway, and the result of the Emperor's first visit to Constantinople was its extension to Konieh!

When in 1898 it became desirable for the Germans that this line should be still further extended to Baghdad and the Persian Gulf (the shortest Berlin-India route independent of the sea!), the Emperor himself became the ambassador of German capital. He sought this concession at Constantinople on the occasion of a second visit to the Sultan, who, "tickled to death" by the Emperor's friendship, granted it at once. Though nominally a commercial line, there could be no doubt as to the military significance of this railway when completed. The Russians were not slow to appreciate the value of such a strategic line on their flank. They vetoed its extension towards the Russo-Turkish frontier.

When we left Constantinople Abdul Hamid was still the all-powerful Sultan, friend of the German Emperor. But in the years that followed up to 1908 his prestige waned, and his enemies waxed stronger. After his deposition he was removed with his wives and a favourite cat to the Villa Allatini in Salonika, where doubtless, during the Great War, he could hear the distant sound of the guns he had helped by his pro-German policy to bring into action.

There was nothing romantic about this Sultan as we saw him in his Palace at Yildiz—nothing of the splendour associated in one's mind with the Sultans of the Thousand and One Nights. I had dreamed of softly splashing fountains in marble courts, of rows of silent jewel-laden slaves, of divans, rose jam and nargileh. Instead of these I passed into the royal presence through apartments dark and gloomy as those of a German boarding-house, and furnished in much the same style.

In the mysterious East there is an institution, called the "harem," that to a Westerner is redolent of the exotic charm of *The Arabian Nights*. Because of its closely guarded, centuries-old secrets, because no Western man may penetrate it save with infinite cunning and at dire peril, it retains some of the glamour of Haroun-al-Raschid's days. But has it any resemblance now to what it was under the magnificent Caliph?

I am bound to confess that not only the palace of the Sultan but also the houses of the upper-class Turks which I visited were very unromantic. The decorations were nearly always in tawdry red and gilt, the pictures for the most part oleographs of landscapes in tarnished frames, and the domestic arrangements primitive and somewhat slovenly.

Turkish homes differ from ours, of course, in that the sexes live apart, the men visiting the *haremlik* only of those women who are closely related to them, while women never penetrate to the *selamlik*, or men's quarters. The girls of the upper classes, however, are educated much as our girls are, learning languages from foreign governesses, playing Bach and Wagner on the piano, and having an extensive acquaintance

with the European fiction which provides them with their often-mistaken ideas of the lives of Western women.

One of my Turkish acquaintances, Besna Hanum, the wife of a close relative of the Sultan and a beautiful and highly-educated woman, told me that the European education of Turkish women has its drawbacks. "We read a good deal we can neither digest nor practise," she said, "and so we become restless and unhappy, wanting things which are denied us."

The harem of Besna Hanum was one of the first I visited during my stay in Turkey, and I remember well my surprise on my first arrival to find myself being assisted from my carriage by a gaunt negro in a black frock coat and red fez. Inside the hall I was met by a crowd of female slaves. These slaves were far from beautiful. They were negresses varying in age from fifteen to forty, and as they removed my wraps I could scarce help smiling at their ludicrous appearance. Dressed in the latest Paris fashions by local dressmakers, the designs carried out in the homeliest of materials, flannel having the preference, they evidently gave much time and thought to their appearance. The extra length of their trains and the rakishness of the flower-trimmed white muslin bonnets perched on the top of their fuzzy heads bore witness to their determination to make the most of themselves. They led me to their mistress, and during the whole of my visit stood round offering tea and rose jam, and generally attending to our wants and listening to our conversation.

Although slavery as an institution was then forbidden by law, a busy traffic in slaves was still carried on *en cachette*, boat-loads of Circassians and negroes

being frequently brought to Constantinople and secreted by well-known dealers until they were disposed of for two or three pounds each to Turkish buyers. One leading Turk told me quite openly: "Of course, we have our slaves. How could we get on without them?" and, pointing to a pretty twelve-year-old child who was serving us at dinner, he whispered, "That girl may one day be the wife of 'The Highest in the Land.' She promises to be very beautiful, and soon I shall send her as a present to His Majesty. If she bears him a son she may become a Sultanah. And I shall gain . . . well, promotion!"

This unscrupulous Turk, who saw nothing revolting in this intended sale of a human being, told me a story, which he swore was true, of a Sudanese slave he once purchased from a slave boat. She was a wild, handsome creature, who was with difficulty persuaded to wear any more clothing than was fashionable in her old home. One day, when her civilization was apparently complete, she was out with his daughters when she caught sight of an English naval officer in uniform. Zoe's eyes glistened. Smacking her lips, she gurgled to the terrified girls: "C'est bon ça. Dans mon pays on mange ça. La peau est très blanche. On fait bien bouillir, puis on met la graisse sur du pain et on mange!" ("There's something good! In my country we eat them. The skin is very white. First we boil them, and then we spread the fat on bread and eat it.") Presumably the sight of his white skin and uniform had aroused her dormant cannibal instinct by recalling some memory of her childhood.

In the brilliant days of the Turkish harems, slaves, standing erect and motionless, were ranged against

the walls wearing magnificent garments and hung with jewels, the wealth and importance of the family being largely judged by the lavish display of them. How so many useless mouths could be fed on the slender incomes of the Turkish officials used to puzzle me. Nor had they themselves solved the problem, for one Turkish acquaintance told me with a smile, "Madame, at the end of the year a Turkish gentleman's budget very often shows a deficit like that of his Government. But what does it matter!"

The expression of an intense longing for freedom perpetually recurs in the conversation of a Turkish woman. Sadié, one of the most attractive and most rebellious of my young friends, used to tell me of the petty restraints of her life. Even the shape and thickness of the garments worn in the street were governed by direct decree from the Sultanate. Turkish women might not use fur or any other trimming on their street clothes. They were not allowed to go out without a companion or attendant slaves, and unless a carriage and a *kavass* (an armed manservant) fetched them, they had to be home by sundown. Theatres and all public places of entertainment were forbidden them, and on returning home they had to suffer the ignominy of having a full account of their doings rendered to the pasha by the *kavass*. Their letters were examined by the pasha before they received them; and they were never free from the prying eyes of slaves.

One can imagine the effect on the nerves of sensitive women of such constant restraint. But although so "cribbed, cabin'd and confin'd," Turkish girls were sometimes very gay and full of fun. I remember once sitting with a number of them in the dusk of

a summer evening at Therapia, where we had been drawn by the beauty of the day to visit a friend who lived in a picturesque *yali*, the balconies of which overhung the turquoise waters of the Bosphorus. One of the girls suggested a game. "Let's all give our written opinion of Pierre Loti," she cried, "and the prize for the best shall be a jar of Sadie's rose jam!" So paper and pencils were fetched, and I watched the competitors as they sat intent, biting the ends of their pencils, their dark eyes fixed reflectively on the gleaming water outside as they tried to fix in words the characteristics of the man who at that time interested Turkish women more than any other.

A few moments later the signal was given, and all hands were outstretched offering me the papers to be read aloud. I remember how struck I was with the piquancy of the judgments passed on the great French writer. The one to which the prize was awarded by common consent ran as follows: "Pierre Loti vaut moins que ses livres et ses livres valent plus que sa vie!" Pretty scathing that as an appreciation, but the writer professed to know Loti well, and was one of the originals of his book, *Les Désenchantées*. To get his knowledge of harem life at first hand, he had, I was told, broken all the rules of Turkish etiquette and had forced himself into more than one of those secluded haunts of maiden dreams, the harems of Constantinople, and it was probably on this fact that they founded their unkind judgment of him.

There was a time when I imagined that the harem was absolutely inaccessible to any man but the husband, father or son of the inmates, but when

I got to know these Turkish girls better they laughed at my idea. "Of course," one of them said, "people will tell you that such things cannot happen—that too careful a watch is kept over a woman and that her servants would betray her—but I know that there are hundreds of flirtations now going on in the harems. Turkish women are extraordinarily clever at carrying on a clandestine affair, and the risk of discovery makes the adventure all the more alluring to a caged woman. Besides, slaves are no harder to bribe than others!"

Indeed, our afternoon party at the *yali* on the shores of the Bosphorus afforded me an illustration of the truth of these words. After supper the father of our hostess, Mirhi, joined us, his grave, severe presence lending a solemnity to our conversation which had before his coming been entirely absent from it. Silently he sat as he lazily sipped his coffee and smoked his *chibook*. Presently one of his daughters rose from her seat near the window and, going over to the piano, began to sing a passionate Western love song with a fervour which could not fail to move the soul of a listener.

The old pasha leaned towards me. Jerking his thumb backwards towards his song-bird he whispered to me in a raucous undertone, "What pleases me most in my daughter's song is that I alone of all men may enjoy it." I caught Mirhi's eye as she stood behind him. She was laughing, yes, splitting with laughter at her father's words. "Come and look at the moon," she said aloud. Then she whispered, "Quick, look there, under the window!" I looked out and saw close to the landing-steps a white caïque, and, sitting in it, motionless, a foreigner wrapped in

the folds of his cloak. One hand idly balanced an oar, the other rested against the wall of the *yali*.

"Who is that?" I asked in amazement.

"Only a fisherman," answered Mirhi. "My sister sings to him every evening at this hour."

Erminie subsequently told me the whole story of her little romance. The "fisherman" was really a young naval officer attached to one of the French ships then in the Port whom she had known for some time—that is, if to make signs without speaking and to recognize a woman whose veil has not been lifted is to "know." She had seen him when out driving with her grandmother, and had received notes which he had managed to smuggle into the carriage. After a time she had replied to these in a note tossed out of the carriage window as she passed him, in which she said that she could never grant his request for a meeting, but that she would sing for him each evening and that in her songs he would find the answer to his wonderful letters.

But Erminie soon tired of singing to an unseen lover. One day, when I was invited to *iftar* (luncheon) with the cousins who had first taken me to visit her, she failed to turn up, having seized the opportunity to spend an amusing *tête à tête* in a mosque with her unknown admirer (disguised as a Turk) while her father thought her safe with her relatives. Growing bolder, she conveyed to him a complete Turkish woman's dress with *tcharchaff* and veil, and actually had the audacity to admit him to her own harem. Advancing a step further, she received him in her bedroom on the top story of the house, to which he gained access by a hole in the roof!

The end of this little romance was much as I had

expected. I read it one day in a few laconic lines of a local paper. "The daughter of —— has brought great trouble upon her family by eloping with a foreign officer. She returned, indeed, a few days ago to her father's home, the officer having deserted her, and was forgiven, but he can never hope to outlive the disgrace brought upon his name." Poor Erminie!

But I could run on for ever telling stories of my little Turkish friends, for they fascinated me beyond words, being so clever, mischievous, unhappy, passionate and light-hearted by turns. They were as frank as children, and told me all their private affairs and initiated me into all the mysteries of that strange life of the harem. Often I pitied them, but again I would say to myself, "Autres pays, autres mœurs." Are we more certain of happiness who wear no *tcharchaff* and who dance the tango with the man who admires us?

Nothing in Pierre Loti's book is truer than his description of the gulf which education has fixed between Turkish mothers and their daughters. He calls it "a gulf of at least two centuries," and so, indeed, it is. I was much struck with this contrast when I visited the wife and daughter of Hamil Pasha. Both wore European dress, but while the pretty dark-eyed daughter seemed perfectly suited to her fashionable toilette, the garments sat ill on her mother's figure.

As the mother did not speak French she could not join in our conversation, and after a word of greeting she remained huddled over the charcoal stove rolling her interminable cigarettes.

Her daughter sat on the sofa beside me, her eyes

never straying from my face, her hands clasped in her lap. Only the even tone of her quiet voice expressed her hopelessness and her strongly contained emotion. She was shortly to be married, and it was with a shock that I learned that this girl, on whom a European education had been lavished, had never even *seen* her prospective bridegroom except once from her window as he passed in the street below. She told me that the unveiling of a bride's face by her husband is one of the ceremonies of marriage. "Marriage is with us the crowning humiliation of our lives," she passionately declared.

A few days later when I met her father I could not resist talking to him of his daughter's unhappiness. "She is like her sister," he said with a laugh. "When I went to see her the morning after her marriage I found her with her head in her hands and her eyes red with weeping. Not very cheerful for her husband, was it? But Aziyade will get used to it. They all do."

The strangeness of the Turkish marriage customs formed a continual subject of wonderment to me during my stay in Constantinople, perhaps because I so often heard it discussed by the caged daughters of the harems. I dined once at the house of a palace official called Noury Bey, who entertained me at dinner by telling me all manner of indiscreet stories about his own domestic affairs and his country. He told me that his mother had been a beautiful Circassian, but that when she was carried off at an early age by the scourge of cholera his father was so lonely that he married three wives straight away, so that his little boy was in the unenviable position of having three quarrelsome stepmothers at one time. His

father had yet other wives in the course of time and buried no fewer than seven.

I still remember my surprise at seeing on the stairs of this house a life-sized statue of a Vestal placed in a niche in the wall. The statue, doubtless for my benefit, had been enveloped in the voluminous folds of a *tcharchaff* (the Turkish woman's street garment), the hood of which was discreetly drawn over the hair. A *yashmak* (the thick veil used to cover the lower part of a woman's face) concealed the features, all but the eyes, and mittens of lace covered the hands that held the sacred fire.

One gets a touch of the old splendour of the Ottoman Caliphate in the weekly Salamlik of Constantinople. It remains in my mind as by far the most interesting sight I saw in the Turkish capital.

It took place every Friday at noon. The origin of it was the state procession of the Caliph, the "Defender of the Faith," to the mosque on that day of the week appointed and set apart for prayer in common. The first Caliphs actually led the prayers of the people in person as their Imam, but the practice was gradually abandoned, and when the heritage of the Caliphate passed into the hands of the Sultans of Turkey at the conquest of Egypt, the latter delegated their powers as hereditary representatives of the Caliphs to a deputy, who then, as now, performed the religious functions in their stead.

On ordinary occasions strangers whose respectability was vouched for by their respective Ambassadors were allowed to watch the procession to and from the mosque. They assembled on the terrace adjoining the kiosk reserved for the foreign Ambassadors

and their staffs, and thence got an excellent view of the curious pageant.

Shortly before noon the quiet reigning near the palace gave way to feverish activity. Two of the special palace guards mounted their horses and galloped off in different directions. Their business was to inform the commanding officers of the troops in waiting at various places in the neighbourhood of the approaching departure of the Sultan's procession. The mosque stood on the same hill on which was built the palace of Yildiz, just below and immediately facing it.

Simultaneously with the disappearance of these mounted messengers appeared a number of small carts full of yellow sand, which was rapidly sprinkled over the road which the Sultan had to traverse. Military music now broke upon the ear as the troops approached from all quarters and took up positions lining the Imperial route.

First came the Marines in splendid uniforms, carrying at their side, in addition to the bayonet, the now obsolete "tomahawk." Above them waved the banner of the Caliphate, the only one in the Army, a black flag embroidered in silver, bearing an inscription from the Koran. At the top of its staff glittered the star of the Order of the Mejidieh, the broad red and green ribbon of the Order floating from it. This decoration was conferred upon the banner by Sultan Abdul Aziz, who adopted this peculiar method of enhancing the prestige of the flag.

After the Marines came the Albanians of the Imperial Guard, fine fellows, in their white Zouave uniforms, their belts stuck full of small arms in addition to the regulation Mauser rifle carried over the shoulder.

Conspicuous among these small arms was a sword-bayonet taking the place of the *yataghan*, a formidable weapon in a hand-to-hand encounter, without which no self-respecting Albanian may be seen.

Behind them in serried lines, four deep, the Lancers took up their position, their gay pennons floating on the breeze. The Lancers were divided into "greys" and "bays," according to the colour of their horses.

Next the Arab troops called for attention, more picturesque perhaps than any others—swarthy-complexioned men with irregular features, hailing straight from Tripoli, their African home. The blue of their Zouave uniforms was in striking contrast to the green of the turbans which encircled their heads.

Following close upon the Imperial troops came the Imperial princes, escorted by their aides-de-camp and orderlies gorgeously arrayed.

Their faces powdered until they looked like death-masks, their breasts covered with jewelled decorations, they marched on foot down the hill from the palace to the mosque, and took up their positions with the battalions to which they were attached.

Two of the Sultan's sons attached to the cavalry mounted their horses and stationed themselves opposite the entrance gate to the mosque. Another son, the favourite Prince Boonar-ed-deen, placed himself at the head of the line of Marines.

The ladies of the Imperial harem and daughters of the Sultan next appeared in a succession of closed landaus, but of them little could be seen beyond occasionally a fan, a flashing jewel, a white-gloved hand, as the inmates for a moment pushed aside the down-drawn carriage blinds.

Their carriages, drawn by splendid Arab horses,

gold caparisoned with tiger-skin saddle-cloths, were followed on foot, each by three of those hideous, thick-lipped, sable-visaged, frock-coated giant attendants who guard the honour of every princess and lady of quality born under the iron yoke of Mohammed.

The carriages drew up in line within the iron railings of the mosque enclosure, and, the horses being taken out, their fair occupants were left to see as much as they could from where they sat.

But this brilliant procession was not yet closed. A long line of pashas next emerged from the palace gateway, all in full-dress uniform, with their orders upon their breasts, and they also quickly walked down the hill to the mosque.

They were the marshals and generals of division, and they moved to their appointed position in line, on the right of the steps leading up to the Sultan's apartments in the left wing of the mosque. Among them were the three sons-in-law of the Sultan.

The last to appear were the numerous Imperial servants—the pipe-bearer, the caféjee, the prayer-carpet spreader, the chief physician, etc. An interval of several minutes occurred after all were in their places, then suddenly the silence gave way to a great shouting as the heralds stood forth and, in a loud voice, proclaimed the near approach of the "Lord of Lords," the "Drinker of Blood," the "Conqueror," the "Lord of the Four Seas and Continents," the Sultan!

Another moment and he came in sight, an outwardly feeble old man, seated in an open carriage, wrapped in a uniform greatcoat, the sombreness of which was relieved only by the long row of orders glittering on his breast. His head, with its henna-

dyed beard, seemed abnormally large, and his body appeared shrunken.

Could this be the Sultan, the dreaded ruler of Turkey, the despotic Sovereign who for years had known how to make himself feared, the man whose keen wit had played off the ablest diplomatists in Europe one against the other? As he was driven slowly by, the answer came from the well-drilled troops: "Padishah chock Pasha!" (Long life to the Sultan!), and the military bands triumphantly proclaimed in the inspiring music of the "Hamidieh" the passing of the Imperial ruler of Turkey.

But these sounds died down and an impressive silence followed as he reached the mosque. As he stepped from his carriage the faint voice of the Imam reached him from the minaret overhead, admonishing him in the time-honoured words to abandon all pride:

"Remember that with all thy might and power, in spite of all this bravery and show, there is One greater than thou art: God! the Most High!"

The devotions of the Sultan did not last long. Hardly twenty minutes passed before he appeared once more. The landau in which he arrived had meanwhile been exchanged for a big pair-horse phaeton in which it was his custom to drive himself slowly back to the palace.

As he passed under the windows of the balcony where the foreign ambassadors were assembled, he raised his white gloved hand and, with a long look of his piercing eyes, leant slightly towards them, giving them a military salute. At the same time he bowed to the ladies who were with them.

His Court accompanied him on the return journey, on foot as they had come, crowding round his carriage,

the highest in rank nearest to the Imperial person, and as they pressed one upon the other, half walking, half running up the hill to keep pace with the horses, they looked as if they were actually pushing the carriage of their royal master, a most curious effect.

I often wondered what might be the feelings of the feminine subjects of the Sultan as they peeped through the closed blinds of their carriages or of the harem windows of the houses lining the route along which passed the gay Salamlik pageant, in which, because of their sex, they could take no part.

A Turkish pasha whom I knew well used to beg me not to pry too closely into this question in my conversations with Turkish women. "Madame," he would say, "believe me, it would not be kind to speak of such matters to our daughters; it would not be the act of a friend to awaken in them the idea that they are unhappy and have not all the advantages that you have."

How wilfully blind was he in not realizing that he himself and others like him caused the mischief he would have imputed to me by educating girls up to the highest standard of Western learning and giving them, in addition, free access to European literature of all kinds!

What, after that, was there left for them to learn from me or any other Western woman? They were taught to be connoisseurs in wine, and then were forbidden to taste it. How inconsistent!

Turkish women, even those who receive a finished European education, remain Oriental at heart. I remember being much struck with this truth one day when I called unexpectedly to see Fathma and Sadie, two friends of mine.

SKETCH OF 'MARGOT'
By Reggie Lister
(Only 'curio saved from our fire)

to that time I had known them as two of the
ighly cultivated women of my Turkish acquaint-
whose prettiness was well set off by the dainti-
f the European-furnished boudoir in which they
y received.

to-day the *haremlik* was very untidy. Sadie
lling on a divan reading a French novel, whose
Leaves Closes, I caught sight of as it fell from
nd. Fathma was sucking bonbons, but other-
unoccupied. She had no stays on, and was
l in a loose wrapper. Her hair, parted in the
, she had apparently not thought it worth while
up, visitors not being expected, and it hung
er back in an untidy little pig-tail.

n I came in she tried unsuccessfully to roll
Her hands, I noticed, were dirty and covered
k stains. While I sat talking to them dark-
me on and a little slave girl crept in, fetched
from a bracket on the wall, took it to pieces
middle of the floor, filled it with oil from a
had brought with her, lighted it, and replaced
this in the drawing-room and before a visitor!
ittle slave girl was clothed in a pink flannelette
hich reached to the knee and gaped at the
ving to its having shrunk in a washing it had
somewhere in the Dark Ages.

slovenliness and sloth of Fathma and Sadie
ot "on parade" and the primitiveness of
mestic arrangements behind the scenes seemed
typical of the civilization of their country.
h a Turk and you will find a barbarian"
d to me a well-deserved version of the old pro-
he polish of the Turk I felt to be purely super-
beneath it were the elemental passions and

the primitive simplicity which distinguished the race in its barbarous beginnings.

Nevertheless, I spent much of my time in Constantinople in the harems of Turkish women, for they were very gentle and affectionate, and I thought to relieve a little the tedium of the quasi-captivity in which they lived. Whether I had been wise in so doing I doubted very much when, shortly after I left Constantinople, I received the following pathetic little letter:—

"Yesterday, dear friend, when you had gone and the last sad farewells had been spoken between us, I felt for the first time in my life that I could struggle no longer under a burden of such crushing hopelessness. For you are gone now, my friend, who alone understood me; you are gone, leaving my imagination thrilled with fresh longings for things for ever denied me, with fresh visions of scenes and countries to me for ever inaccessible—thanks to the inexorable law of my country, so beautiful and yet so cruel, which has decreed that we Turkish women shall be for ever slaves.

"Twenty years I had spent in my father's harem, twenty years I had idled in the high-walled garden that enclosed it, knowing nothing of life but what I gathered from books; and then you came, and from that moment all was changed.

"I sat at your feet and I listened to all that you had to tell me of the wonderful West and the women over there. I learnt to appreciate the high ideals that animate women like you. Day by day I realized more of the length and breadth and width of your lives compared to the stifling limitations of ours.

"Now I am no longer content merely to read and

hear of those lives. I want to go out and live as you do. I want to be free, as you are free. I want to be loved and loving as you are. Oh, why did Fate make of me a Turkish captive debarred from all that makes life worth living? "

This letter, as may be imagined, made me very unhappy, for it made it quite clear that I had done the very thing which my pasha friend had warned me against. I had opened a door, the threshold of which might never be overstepped, alluring as was the prospect beyond.

I wrote a few words in answer. "Take courage, my poor little captive," I urged. "The law of compensation exists all the world over, in a Turkish *haremlik* as in an English village, and liberty does not always spell happiness. Unfettered freedom of action, unhindered intercourse between men and women, often bring us in the West face to face with impossible situations and irreducible problems from which you in your harems are safe! "

But even as I penned the trite words, I felt what cold comfort was in them!

Our stay in Constantinople was cut short by a terrible disaster which befell us on February 2. Our house with all its treasured collection of souvenirs from many lands was burned to the ground in two hours. My husband was at the Embassy, two miles away, at the time, but I was in bed, having been ill, and was just thinking of getting up.

I dozed with my little dog at my side when suddenly I was roused by a curious kind of crackling noise in the wall. I jumped up and looked out of the window, and there I saw smoke puffing out between the eaves

and the roof. Then I said to myself, "Ça y est!" I rushed to the head of the stairs to give the alarm, shouting, "Fire!" By this time my bedroom was alight, a shower of burning plaster falling like coloured snow from the ceiling.

The Greek footman was the first to answer my call, but when he saw the ceiling in flames he threw up his hands and ran for dear life, screaming like an hysterical woman. He was followed by all the other Turkish servants. They served the one useful purpose of giving the alarm.

Meanwhile, I calculated that I had about three minutes in which to save what I could. I tore the sheet from my bed, spread it on the floor and piled my jewels and furs on it. I shoved my arms into a coat, gathered up the four corners of the sheet and flung the bundle over my shoulder, and then, barefooted and bare-headed, with my little dog in my arms, I escaped. As I passed down the stairs the great chandelier fell in flames from the roof of the hall, setting fire to the rest of the house.

Downstairs I found a howling mob, but I pushed my way through them out of the house into the harem of the Turkish house opposite, where I put on some shoes I had managed to save. Still in my "nighty," with my hair flying anyhow, I was for making my way to the German Embassy, our nearest "white" neighbours, when I received a delicate parting attention from the firemen in the shape of a jet of water from their hose, which caught me full on the head and wetted me through.

In this condition, terrified and exhausted by my awful experience, I staggered on to the German Embassy, where the Ambassadress most kindly

received me, lending me clothes from her own wardrobe, which I wore for a week afterwards, as nothing of mine was saved.

It was a horrid experience, but there was an element of humour even in such a dire calamity, which was afforded by the conduct of the sailors belonging to the German *Stationnaire* in the port, who, coming up to assist in salving our possessions, found a framed photograph of the ex-Kaiser in my room.

This they reverently took charge of and, regardless of the fact that meanwhile our house was burning, they formed up a little party of six and solemnly goose-stepped off to the German Embassy. There, after being admitted by the kavass to the presence of Herr Marschall von Bieberstein (the same man who was afterwards appointed Ambassador to London but died before taking up his post), they solemnly handed over to him the portrait of "Unser Kaiser!"

On their return to our house they found time to save the *Encyclopædia Britannica*—in thirty-six volumes!—which they flung out of the window into the garden, but of our beautiful Chinese and Japanese collections nothing escaped, alas!

CHAPTER VIII

In the Holy Land

A tour through the Holy Land—Wonders of the Holy City—A caravan journey to Damascus—Pilgrims returning from Mecca—How the Kaiser looted Palestine.

HAVING now no home and no possessions, we were free to do as we pleased, and we determined to visit the Holy Land.

We took ship at Port Said one lovely April day in 1905, our destination being Jaffa, where we lay at anchor for some time until a surf boat came alongside to take us off.

Our transfer from ship to boat was not a pleasant experience. Before I was aware of their intention, and without any "by your leave," I was seized in the stalwart arms of two strong Jaffaites and deposited like a bundle in the bottom of the boat as it rose on the crest of a wave to an altitude convenient for the operation.

I was too seasick at the moment to feel any active resentment. Besides, I learnt afterwards that necessity, which stands not on ceremony, was the motive which spurred them to action at this juncture, and later when I heard the horrifying tale of how the day before a party of eleven were capsized and all their luggage lost in the sea as they went through the

same experience, I even felt something akin to gratitude for our superior luck.

The British Consul came to meet us and, handing over the care of our luggage to his native servants, we accompanied him on foot through the labyrinthine streets to his house on the outskirts of the town, where, in the cool shade of his lovely garden, we waited for the evening train to Jerusalem.

Just after sunset on a bitterly cold evening we entered the Holy City and asked hospitality of the Franciscan monks in Casa Nova, their monastery. Here we were most kindly received and entertained for a week, no bill being presented when we left.

It was a marvellous sight to see all religions and sects fighting for standing room round the sepulchre of Our Lord. Though some people profess to be shocked at this sight, to me it was but a touching proof of the universal belief in the Divinity of the Man Christ, Who once lay within. That many disputes occur between rival forms of religion is after all proof of the jealous love of each for the common Lord. Men are subject here, as elsewhere, to the weaknesses and even smallnesses inherent in human nature. Nevertheless, the atmosphere in Jerusalem is one of reverence and of a common desire to honour the holy places connected with the life and death of Christ.

Steeped as one was in the religious atmosphere of these scenes, it was almost a necessity at times to turn to others of a mundane character. Thus we visited every hole and corner of the city, which, apart from the religious sentiment inseparably connected with it, is of the greatest ethnological interest

on account of the extraordinary number and variety of types to be met with in the streets.

Jews, Armenians, Copts, Arabs, Russians, Greeks, Syrians, Abyssinians, Turks, and Indians jostle each other in bewildering variety of garb and head-dress. Yet all have their marked characteristics by which you may come to know them in time.

We visited the Wailing Place of the Jews, where they come weekly to lament over the lost greatness of Jerusalem, knocking their heads against a wall, the last fragment of the great Temple of Solomon. This is a very ancient custom, but it seems almost unbelievable that men should find time to remain faithful to its observance in this busy practical twentieth century.

The two most interesting buildings in Jerusalem are the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mosque of Omar. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is to the Christians one of the holiest spots on earth, for it was erected by the Emperor Constantine on what was said to be the actual site of the burial-place of Our Lord.

The approach to the church is down one of the narrowest and steepest of Jerusalem's streets, and the way is lined by beggars sitting against the walls on either side who, exposing their infirmities, implore the charity of the passer-by. The great square court-yard outside it is constantly crowded with pilgrims and street vendors.

Inside the sanctuary we were startled to find ourselves face to face with a Turkish guard of soldiers in uniform. In old days they were there to collect the Sultan's tax, but now their duties are purely nominal, and they sit on their heels just inside the

WAILING JEWS AT THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

door and spit and smoke and gaze at the thousands of Christian worshippers who daily pass in and out of the sacred edifice.

We had hired a caravan and tents to ride through Samaria and Galilee to Damascus, equipped with most comfortable camp furniture, our service being provided for by a number of followers headed by one Halil, who in the weeks to come was to prove himself not only a good servant but also a most entertaining guide.

All the curious folk in Jerusalem turned out to see our start, for the fact that we had engaged the same tents, guide and followers as had the Emperor William II a few years before, lent considerable prestige to our expedition.

The first night we pitched our tents at a place called Singil, where the children were so rude and offensive that they reminded me of those others in the Bible who followed Elisha, mocking him and crying, "Go up, thou bald head!" We caught one of them and administered exemplary punishment as a warning to the others. Then, walking through olive groves dating back to Roman times, we came to Nablus.

The ancient paved streets, to which the sunlight seldom, if ever, penetrates, were lined with small shops and peopled by a motley crowd of Arabs, less beautiful than those of Singil but still most picturesque, in their tattered and dirty garments. As Halil said, "They never wash except by mistake, when the rain of heaven wets their cheeks!"

The next day we rode on to Samaria, through very fertile country, under the shade of olive and fig trees. Pretty girls washing at the wells or marching

along with water-jars on their heads and that swinging gait so peculiar to women of their race, paused to look curiously after us.

We pitched our luncheon camp close to where a party were at work and I talked to some of them, Halil acting as interpreter. I took a small hand-glass from my bag and, to their delight, showed them their reflections in it.

Passing Dothan, where Joseph was sold by his brethren, we entered a long marshy valley, our camp being pitched that night at "Jennin, on the border of Issachar, in the Plain of Esdraelon."

Next morning, we saw a number of poor Turkish peasants being sent off as recruits to the army in the Yemen.

To prevent their escape, some of them were handcuffed to older soldiers. Their relatives hung about bidding them farewell. There were most harrowing scenes, especially on the part of the weeping wives, who were left with their children utterly destitute in cases where the field-labourer, the support of the family, was taken from them.

I shall never forget the picture they made, sitting like crows in a row by the wayside, hiding their heads in the folds of their *yashmaks* and wailing loudly as their handcuffed relatives were marched away before them.

The long and stony climb to the village of Nazareth I would have enjoyed more, for the view from the ascending mountain path was wide and beautiful, had I not felt so ill and feverish.

By the evening I was so ill that I had to take to my camp-bed. Halil went off to find a missionary doctor, who presently arrived. His coming was

quite *dans la note* of this holy place. For he was a monk in a white habit, and he ambled into the camp astride an ass.

As he neared my tent, the animal took fright at something and shied violently, landing the venerable padre on his back at our feet. Luckily, he was not hurt. He diagnosed my case as one of sunstroke and malarial chill.

As soon as he heard the nature of my malady, Halil declared himself ready to prescribe. He requested permission to sprinkle my head with cold water. "For," he declared, "there where the sun has hit your head the water will bubble and boil, and when once we have in that way located the spot the cure is easy. Cold wet compresses will do the rest!"

I took the padre's medicine, but I was so anxious for relief from the terrible pain I was suffering that I accepted Halil's ministrations also. But neither he nor the missionary cured me effectually, and it was several days before it was possible for us to continue our journey.

Our next move was to Cana, where, as in Nazareth, the people are extraordinarily good-looking. Thence next day we set out for Tiberias.

On our way we photographed a Bedouin camp, and later some Greek priest-pilgrims journeying to Tiberias. We met many Christian Syrian pilgrims going to Jerusalem for the Easter festival. Some travelled on camels; others we met were seated on an inverted kitchen-table fixed to a camel's back!

A group of women going to harvest came marching along with a swinging stride, one of them balancing on her head her child in its wooden cradle.

Another family party, whom we saluted as we passed,

looked very tired, having evidently come from a great distance. The father led a pack mule, upon whose back were slung two wine cases, in each of which slept a child. The footsore mother lagged behind, a third one in her arms.

Riding on, Halil pointed out to us the Horns of Hattin and the Mount of Beatitudes, where Christ preached the Sermon on the Mount. From this point we began to ride downhill to Tiberias, which is 626 feet below sea level. We skirted the edge of the Sea of Galilee for some way, and then pitched our camp close to the water's edge, with only the high-road between it and us.

Père Guillaume, a French missionary priest, whom we visited, told us that the Jews were busy that day washing up their houses and selves for the festival of the Pesach (the Passover); we afterwards saw them washing every conceivable household article in the river. Their dress was very quaint. Some of the women wore velveteens to do their washing, and the men billycock hats and side ringlets.

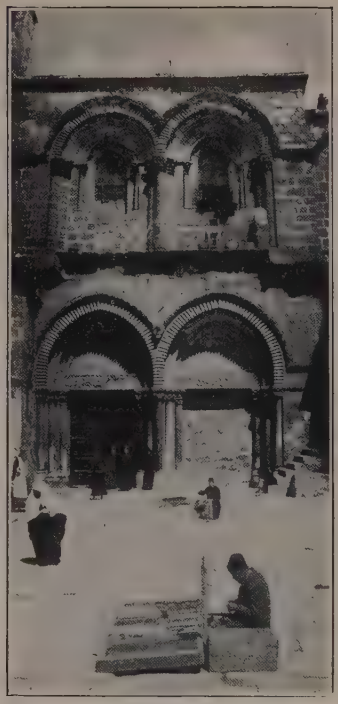
We went for a moonlight row on the sea. The boat boy sang a melodious chant, which Halil translated for me:

"O God, the night is dark—where is my Beloved?
His loss is worse to me than blindness.
They said to me, 'We will bring Thy Loved One back';
But still He cometh not to me.
O God, Who art the God of Love,
Keep not my Loved One from me,
Give back to me my Lover, although Thou take mine eyes."

After bathing in the Sea of Galilee, we rowed across to Capernaum, where we were met by our horses.

Passing out of the valley we had a bad road to

STREET SCENE IN JERUSALEM



DOORWAY OF
THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE
JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM, 1905

negotiate going up the hill to Bethsaida, and the mountain on which Christ fed the five thousand (Luke ix–x).

We lunched in a rocky pass covered with exquisite wild flowers, and pillowing our heads on our saddles we slept under the shade of some olive trees till the cool of the evening.

Then we rode on past the three Rothschild Jewish colonies set in a glorious flowered plain, until, passing through a wonderful valley between two hills, we came suddenly upon the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob. There we found a guard sent to meet us by a Turkish governor. To display their zest they spent the night round about our tents, letting off revolvers at imaginary thieves. It was a lovely camping-ground we occupied that night in a field by the side of the old bridge built by the Romans to span the Jordan, which here became a torrent.

We rode that morning through an entrancing flower country, over a Persian carpet (I can use no other word for it) of wild blossoms almost reaching to the girths of our horses. And they were not delicate little blossoms as are those of our fields, but large, waxy blooms like begonias, of yellow, red, and all the pastel tints. I shall never forget the beauty of it.

Anon we passed the deserted pest-stricken village of Imhaffa where the dead cattle stank insufferably. Vultures hovered everywhere or sat gorged in ghastly rows, every now and then sweeping down afresh upon their hideous prey. The villagers, who are Turcomans, had fled the stricken spot. They were out under canvas miles away, and would not return until winter frosts improved the atmosphere.

We hurried on, and once clear of this nightmare

neighbourhood stopped to lunch in an oasis of green, set down as a jewel in the midst of a stony plain.

A further short ride brought us to Kuneitra, where we pitched our camp for the night on an open plain of smooth, green grass, almost like an English lawn. A land of contrasts is this Holy Land!

We were glad to make a start again early next morning. At first we rode along a newly metalled high-road, or what appeared to be newly metalled, but the grass growing between the stones soon undeceived us.

Halil, who knew every inch of the country we were riding over, as also all the gossip connected with it, told us that the combination of metal and green grass on the same road testified to the fact that the bridges over the water-courses that frequently intersected it had never been built, the money voted for them having been *empoché* (pocketed) by those charged with their construction. The road was consequently unusable, and we had to make our way as best we could over the fields bordering it, scrambling over the water-courses wherever a possible place presented itself.

The result was that soon after leaving El Kuneitra we took a wrong bridle-path and had to be set right by a passing native. Our way lay across a stony plain, keeping the snowy range of Mount Hebron on our left. We had left the smiling flower-carpeted regions of yesterday.

The rocky boulders which encumbered our path impeded us at every turn, and presently alternated with extensive marshes and deep fords, through which our horses struggled wearily up to their girths in the muddy, malodorous water.

Emerging from one of these marshes, we vainly sought the continuation of the path we had previously followed. Fortunately, just at the moment when, failing after diligent search to recover the lost trail, Halil was beginning to look worried, we espied in the distance a little body of cavalry evidently on the look out for our party.

Tidings of a "great man's" progress through the country travels with mysterious rapidity in the primitive East, and news of our approaching arrival at Damascus had somehow preceded us. Thus it was that a party of soldiers had been sent off with orders to find us and bring us into the town.

Halil, our guide, whose pride was touched, declared he did not need their services, but they flatly declined to leave us. The country, they said, was unsafe for travellers—it was infested by brigands. The way was lonely; besides, we should be unable to find it without assistance from local guides, for, bad as it was where we had come to, it would shortly be ten times more rocky and marshy! The Turkish Government would hold them responsible for our safety, and that seemed to clinch the argument. Escort us they would.

So we yielded, and started again, the picturesqueness of our cavalcade greatly enhanced by their company.

Two *zaptiehs* (gendarmes) led the way with unerring instinct over those apparently trackless wastes, and three brought up the rear, one of whom rode a mare with a foal at heel.

Suddenly the *zaptieh* riding ahead dug his spurs into his horse's flanks and dashed forward at a gallop. I thought this pointed to some danger hidden from us, which his keen eyes had detected. But no!

He stopped as suddenly as he had started, and dismounting by a rock, in a depression of which was a puddle of stagnant rain-water, called his companions to him, and together they performed the prescribed ablutions before their noon-tide devotions. We reined up and waited.

Having washed and removed the shoes from their feet, they turned their faces towards Mecca, and then with bent head and clasped hands prayed aloud, and on the stillness of that desolate scene their voices rang out in the time-honoured chant: "Allah il Allah!"

On, on, we rode. The grandeur of that ride I would not have missed. I have never seen it equalled in any part of the world.

The solitude was appalling, and the silence could be felt. At one of the fords we had to wade through, three of the baggage mules stuck in the treacherous bog, and one in trying to extricate himself fell and was cut severely on the hind-quarters.

Oh, how tired I was—tired of this trackless, stony waste, tired of the cold frown of snowy Mount Hermon gazing pitilessly down at the human worms crawling along at her feet, tired of the laziness of my poor horse, who continuously stumbled as he picked his way between slippery rocks!

At last we came within sight of Sassa. Never was vision of enchanted castle more welcome to the eyes of Fairy Prince than was poor Sassa to me, with its small mud-houses and its few score of trees. Another quarter of a mile, through another deep ford, and at last we reached the haven of our camp, which had been sent ahead, and was pitched ready to welcome us just beyond the village.

STREET SCENE IN NAZARETH

OUR CAMP AT NAZARETH

A further day's ride was before us across the vast plain in which Damascus lies enshrined, an emerald in a sea of sand.

When on the following morning we looked out from Sassa towards our promised goal we fancied we could almost see it, so pellucid was the atmosphere, so flat the plain dividing us from it. On coming out of our tents, we found a fresh posse of men sent out to meet us and escort us into the city. So we started again under the guardianship of these new men mounted on shaggy little ponies. With their variegated attire and antiquated fire-arms, they looked fierce enough to inspire terror in the heart of the stoutest stage brigand!

The going was decidedly better that day, and we were able to cover the ground quickly.

Eyes and nose were again offended by dead carrion on which dogs were busy, while the ubiquitous vulture hovered near.

We lunched in a delicious grove of olives, under whose grateful shade we slept during the hottest part of the day. Then into the saddle again and forward once more towards that white city, now so plainly visible, yet apparently always receding—Damascus, the Mecca of our long ride.

We reached it at last, but oh, misery! the first sight of it was disappointing, as usual! Much as I have travelled in every country of the world, I have never yet known a place come up to my imagined picture of it.

The approach to this ancient city (how many soldiers of our gallant Mesopotamian army will recognize my description of Damascus, I wonder?) led us along a road bordered on each side by glades

of forest trees spreading over carpets of flowers and grass. It was a restful and refreshing sight after the glare of the endless plain outside. In these same woods many men of the city were at work rope-making under the trees, and their gay garments as they moved to and fro lent just that note of colour which was otherwise lacking.

We alighted at the "Hotel Victoria," a commonplace, Europeanized inn, and regretfully stood by and watched as, for the last time, Halil unsaddled our faithful steeds. Then came the pang which all travellers have experienced, when the words of farewell must be spoken to those who have served one so well.

We were out betimes next morning to see the procession of pilgrims returning with the Sacred Carpet from Mecca. It was a unique chance which had brought us to Damascus just in time for this curious procession, which, of course, is to be seen only twice a year—on the departure and return of the pilgrimage. We forged our way in carriages through a dense crowd of natives, who, in every colour and form of garment, entirely unpoliced, peaceably filled every nook and corner, every coign of vantage of the narrow and tortuous streets through which the procession was to pass.

Wherever the eye rested, it met the gaze of eager sightseers patiently and cheerfully waiting. On the flat roofs they squatted in thousands; every window was well filled, and every balcony, the ascent and descent to and from which was accomplished by means of ladders hired out by enterprising street arabs.

Our horses, fine, high-spirited little Arabs, kicked

and plunged, terrified by the noise and bustle, and every moment I expected an accident, for even under normal conditions the streets of Damascus, like the bazaars of old Cairo, are barely wide enough to allow of two carriages driving abreast.

At last it came! One of our horses shied, kicked over the pole, and in trying to free himself got his leg caught in the harness and fell, dragging the other one with him.

Then followed pandemonium—crowds scattering, women shrieking, horses kicking—until finally, the driver and kavass having dexterously freed the poor beasts and helped them to their feet, I was politely invited to resume my seat in the carriage. But it seemed to me we could go no farther without imminent risk to the heedless population, so we obtained permission to pass through an inner court to the flat roof of a house, already thickly peopled with Arabic women and children.

With the courtesy that is inborn in them, they pushed us into the best and foremost places for seeing, and thus we had an excellent view of the procession.

It was an interesting study to see this crowd of dejected, weary, bedraggled, sun-blackened pilgrims mounted on camels whose shaggy coats had grown ragged and patchy. They sat in every conceivable attitude that would ease, I suppose, their tired limbs. Fatigue, deadly, hopeless fatigue, was written in every line of their faces and bodies; I never saw fatigue personified till I had looked upon those pilgrims.

A military escort who had accompanied the procession all the way looked as sun-baked and exhausted

as the other victims of this terrible arduous trek across the desert to Mecca. The Sacred Carpet was, of course, the centre of interest to the waiting crowd. It travelled under a magnificent catafalque, covered with cloth-of-gold, and was guarded by an escort of soldiers who pressed close around it.

Preceding it was the covered conveyance which had contained the presents sent from Damascus to the Holy City, and following it rode the Sheikh Ul Islam in full priestly robes of bright green and white turban.

The Governors of Damascus, both civil and military, and all the soldiers stationed in the city, together with the sheikh of that place, had gone out, mounted, to meet and receive the procession. They now returned with it, some of them riding beautiful Arab horses.

The Sacred Carpet was taken to the military Serai, and there in the presence of the thousands who pressed forward and reverently kissed it, it was deposited for safe-keeping in the custody of the governor, who is responsible for it until next year, when it emerges once more for its annual pilgrimage. Its mission on arrival at Mecca is to cover the Kahaba or sacred stone.

The bazaars of Damascus are perhaps its most attractive feature, its monuments being few, and more or less devoid of interest.

We visited, of course, the huge new mosque rebuilt on the site of the one far more beautiful, no doubt, and containing exquisite things in the way of old tiles, which was burnt down some years ago. The present one is attractive on account of its vast height and length, and the immensity of its court.

From the mosque we were taken to see the Tomb of Saladin, but I was disgusted here to find a token of regard for this very anti-Christian Sultan in the shape of a large gold laurel wreath deposited by the most Christian ex-Emperor, William II. Even in this instance, however, his flattery failed to give entire satisfaction to those whom he sought to cajole. The Mohammedans resented the introduction of a Cross (the emblem of Christianity) into the composition of the funereal trophy.

Syria was at that time ringing with stories of William II's visit there, and many were the anecdotes we heard, not all of which redounded to his credit. In fact, he seems to have done a good deal to diminish that credit during the course of his triumphal progress.

Especially does he appear to have given offence by the parsimony of the gifts he offered in exchange for the priceless treasures he carried off from the houses of those Arabs and Turkish officials whom he delighted to honour by visiting them in their homes. Said one of those to me: "The ship that carried away the booty collected in Palestine very nearly sank at her moorings, so heavily was she laden, for His Majesty refused nothing that was offered, and through his Consul-Generals very often intimated a desire for that which was not offered!"

In this way he carried off the whole of the ivory inlaid furniture of a room specially decorated for his reception. In exchange, he presented a life-size portrait of himself.

On another occasion, as the Arab troops were being paraded before him, he singled out two youths for the excellence of their horsemanship and the beauty of the accoutrements of men and beasts. They

were accorded the privilege of riding behind the Imperial carriage and believed their fortunes to be made.

On arrival at Damascus His Majesty, through his Consul-General, asked for the harness of the one horseman which he particularly admired, and the lance of the other, both of which were of exquisite workmanship. They happened to be in pawn with the youths, two less fortunate comrades having borrowed the equivalent of 400 francs on them.

The gallant fellows, however, did not hesitate to offer them to His Majesty, "quitte à payer les 400 francs" to the rightful owners, and were overjoyed when in return a gold ten mark piece was conveyed to each from the Emperor. They took the coin to be a high German decoration. But when their mistake was pointed out to them they flung the coins on the ground in their anger and disappointment.

We knew the Damascus bazaars thoroughly by the time we left, for there was not a hole or corner of them which we left unexplored during the four or five days of our stay.

They are, as a rule, narrow covered ways lined on either side with open-fronted booths in which sit vendors cross-legged extolling their wares to the passer-by.

The women sometimes bargain with these vendors for hours, haggling, as is the wont of their sex everywhere, over the price to be paid for a gay-coloured shawl or a bright strip of silk.

Of the beauty or otherwise of these women it is impossible to judge. Mohammedan women all over Turkey in Asia are clothed in black, with their

faces completely hidden by coloured and opaque figured veils, which they wear confined by a forehead band, and securely fastened below the chin. Their features are thus so effectually concealed that it is impossible for any prying eye to pierce their disguise.

Their young children, however, are open to the admiration of all; each is perched astride upon the mother's hip, with her encircling arm around its waist. Most sweet and winsome are the various types of Arab babes thus seen.

In the country around Nazareth and at Nablus the women were not so closely veiled as in Damascus. When, for instance, we surprised them washing at the village fountain or working in the olive groves, they allowed us full liberty to admire the real beauty of their dark eyes and red lips. The countrywomen are not shy, as the town dwellers are, and would often laugh and exchange glances with the men of our party as coquettishly as might have done their Western sisters.

The biggest, but also the most modern, of the bazaars in Damascus is the so-called "Greek" bazaar, and here are the best curiosity shops. We bought burnouses and opalescent glass and one or two examples of Damascene pottery and armour, but the prices asked were excessive.

Opening out of the bazaars at intervals were *khans*, or enclosed and roofed courts, great two-storied enclosures with shops below, a gallery above, and a cool, splashing fountain in the centre. These *khans* are the busy centres of the wholesale trade of the town.

The Khan Asad Pasha is the largest and handsomest of them. Four stout stone columns divide its space

into nine enclosures, the central one with its fountain being the largest, and over each of these rises a domed roof. The walls are constructed of alternate courses of black and yellowish stone.

The dim light of these vast *khans* and the coolness of their shadowy recesses make them delightful resorts to those coming from the heat and glare of the outside world. The men collect in them for gossip and business, wandering among the stacked bales of goods which encumber them, or pillowed in cosy corners for sleep.

Haunting them as we did for a week, we had opportunity to study at leisure the many types there presented—Arab, Bedouin, Persian, Mahommedan, Jew—but we were bewildered by the very multiplicity of these types, and found ourselves constantly referring to the dragoman in our anxiety to recognize one from the other.

STRIKING CAMP AT NABLOOS

ARABS ON THE ROAD TO JERICHO

CHAPTER IX

America

Washington, the Mecca of diplomatists—We are eulogized at first by the American Press—What America is like—Its hurry and social ambition—American wives and their husbands—A visit to the Bowery—Opium dens—A lost Englishwoman—How I offended some American journalists—What they said of me and what I think of them.

FROM Constantinople to Washington is a far cry, yet it was our luck to find our home, at a stroke of the official pen, transferred from one to the other, when in 1905 my husband was promoted Councillor of Embassy in the United States capital.

Washington is the Mecca of all diplomatists who cannot be appointed to London. We were naturally delighted to be sent there, and determined to make the most of our stay in America. We were very kindly received and at first had what the French would call *une bonne presse.* American newspapers in the main are amongst the best run and best informed in the world. I have visited and lived in many countries of the Old and New Worlds, and have had ample opportunity of judging their Press, but nowhere, unless it be in England, have I come across such a "live" Press as that of the United States. Journalists in that country are a force to be reckoned with. They are influential, go-ahead and well-informed,

and on the whole make good use of their power. Sensationalism is a national characteristic, and of this quality they naturally have their full share, but their judgments, on the whole, are fair, their business notions are sound, and their opinions on men and matters of much value.

There is, however, a section of that Press, known in America as the Yellow Press, which to our English ideas is pushing and vulgar to the last degree. The touts for so-called Society journals invade the sanctity of private life to an almost incredible extent. Newcomers in Washington or New York as a rule fall a prey to them, for, not being on their guard, they are caught by telephone or otherwise almost before they are aware of the trap that has been laid for them. My husband and I were not allowed to escape.

Walter's past career was painted in glowing colours. Indeed, his talents were so highly esteemed that the most ambitious official flights were deemed to be well within his reach. "It is quite likely that Mr. Townley covets the Vice-Royalty of India as his ultimate honour," wrote one of these papers, "and there are many reasons why he would make a great candidate for that onerous post. While at Teheran he received an allowance for proficiency in the Persian tongue, and he has since extended his knowledge of the Aryan (!) languages and literatures to the unbelievable point."

As for me, I was a "bright, brainy, winsome and accomplished little lady"—("Margot" could hardly beat that!)—"one of the most valuable acquisitions which the Diplomatic Corps had had in years!" My personal appearance, dress and conversation were freely commented upon. It was remarked that

I wore my jewels "in a manner made famous by the infamous Leonor Telies" (who was she?), also that "on State occasions" I wore "a diagonal sash of blue and white" (it happened to be green, red and white, the grand cordon of the Sheffakat) "upon which gleamed a resplendent decoration, i.e., the Order of the Garter, the Victoria Cross, or some such bric-à-brac." Could anything surpass this!

But from the first they got "mixed" about my family connexions. These furnished them subject matter for endless paragraphs. They described me as the daughter of the 7th Earl of Aberdeen. This would not have signified, for both Aberdeen and Albemarle begin with an A, and therefore confusion between the two might have been forgiven had they not gone a step further and credited me with "all the Gordon independence of thought and action, as well as the Gordon *savoir-faire*" to which I naturally had no claim. They saw symptoms in me also of that "diplomatic sagacity" which distinguished my supposed father, Lord Aberdeen.

They found out their mistake in time, however, and got on the right track at last when they discovered in "Lady Susan the real daughter of a *bona fide* Earl who goes to parties duly tagged and labelled as such." Not only was I "the daughter of the late belted Earl of Albemarle," but incidentally I was also "the sister of the present holder of the belt."

Then a vexing problem arose. What "status" should be given me as such? "The William J. Boardmans seem to be the only people in Washington Society who know what to do with Lady Susan. They placed her next to the Vice-President at a

dinner-party last week, and thereby raised quite a storm from natives who think they should have followed the Washington code of etiquette rather than the British. Lady Susan is, if her Ladyship will excuse the expression, playing the very deuce, and Washington hostesses are getting grey."

Finally, "this problem so vexing to many hostesses" was decided. In deference to democratic feeling in America, it was resolved not to follow the custom on this point "prevalent in monarchical countries," but to "allot" to me the rank of my husband in the Diplomatic Service, and although it was noticed that I "bitterly resented such a ruling" this decision was thereafter adhered to.

Soon after our arrival in America, the Foreign Office ordered an official inspection to be made of all the British Consulates in the country, and upon my husband devolved this task. It entailed our leaving Washington on a long tour which took us from north to south, from east to west, so that we visited in turn practically all the large cities.

Now the actual fact of travelling in America is an experience I cannot appreciate. Nothing in the world equals the discomfort of it. An American sleeping-car, where a score or more of people of both sexes are boxed up for the night head and toe in curtained cubicles arranged in two tiers and divided only by a thin partition, is to me an abomination. Never shall I forget the misery of it. My nights were generally rendered sleepless by the snoring of my neighbours, then my temper for the day was ruined by frantic endeavours to dress on my bed and within the protecting folds of my curtains. We most of us know, in travelling, the discomfort of

having to put on one's clothes without washing one's face even; but add to that the misery of standing in a queue struggling to get to the apartment at the end of the sleeping-coach where this desirable operation must be performed at least once daily if your journey is to last a week, as most journeys in America appear to me to do.

Another feature of travel in the new world which I particularly dislike, but which many people appreciate, is the impossibility of escape from one's fellow-travellers, even in the case of headache or weariness. In the long undivided coaches all the chairs are on pivots, so that one is exposed to the public gaze from every angle. Alas! American travelling ideas are making strides in England. We now have corridor trains and a great extension of the Pullman and Restaurant Cars. I hope we may draw the line at the cubicle sleeping-car accommodation. Of course, if one is rich enough and successful in applying for it before some one else does, one can travel in the drawing-room car, but the cost of this is prohibitive to many.

Still, I was glad of the chance of seeing so much of America. We found New York, Chicago and Boston all three typically American: one as the home of the dollar, the other as the centre of the meat trade, and the third as the seat of learning. All three are as different from each other as gin is from water, though both look alike in the bottle! In the same way did we find the East vary from the West—Santa Barbara from Havana—San Francisco from New Orleans—Salt Lake City from St. Louis—Philadelphia, the old-colonial, from Palm Beach, the up-to-date and flirtatious.

Our first visit was to Florida. We travelled by the Palm Limited Express, and broke our journey at Savannah, continuing our way to a place called Palatka, the starting-point for the Oklawaha River, one of the show sights of Florida. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, writing her impressions of this river by night, says: "The dusky plumage of the palmettos waving above, lit by torchlight, looks like the fine tracery of a wondrous sculptured roof."

Her description is both poetical and true, but it does not give the other side of the picture. She does not tell how depressing it is to glide on in these same magic surroundings without change for twenty-four hours, when the eye, satiated with the green profusion of waving palmettos and lofty cypress, seeks in vain for a more distant perspective, when the ear, charmed at first by silence, craves for the note of a bird that will break it. The narrow river limits one's horizon always. There is no escape from the coils of its green embrace.

But Palm Beach is charming, both from the scenic and the social point of view. The hotels accommodate an immense number of guests and are built in the midst of palm groves on an island in the Atlantic. They have a casino, swimming pool, tennis-courts, golf-course, and last, but not least, the most beautiful garden in the world—one of the few gardens where coco-nut palms look at home, instead of appearing to eke out a starved existence in the uncongenial surroundings to which they have been transplanted.

In this fantastically beautiful garden are pink and white oleanders, cannas, patches of white quince blossom, plumbago, bougainvillæa, and giant hibiscus bushes starred with innumerable red blooms, each

one six inches across. The magic of that garden needs its own poet to paint it, when the night shades bring out the scent of orange blossom, when the fireflies gather to their brilliant revels, while the great full moon looks down on the young people pacing by the level stretches of the calm seashore.

As for social gaiety, nothing in Nice or in Monte Carlo can touch Palm Beach. It is, essentially, a place for the young. Its throngs of white-clad maidens and flannel-coated youths ride, swim, fish and play games all day, and in the evening they dance, flirt and gamble. They ask nothing more of life.

From ultra-modern Palm Beach a quick change via Miami transferred us to Havana, the fascinating old capital of Cuba, where we allowed ourselves a few days in spite of the fact that it was not within our official "beat."

In the harbour is an historical relic—the half-submerged wreck of the *Maine*. I looked with interest at the shattered keel and twisted turret of this once powerful battleship, on whose tragic loss so great an issue had depended. Few wrecked hulls are vested with such tragic significance.

The harbour of Havana possesses a personal interest for me, as it was two of my ancestors, General Lord Albemarle and Admiral Viscount Keppel, two brothers, who captured this prize for England in 1762, the one commanding the land forces and the other the armada. A third brother was Chief of the Staff to Lord Albemarle. Soon after its capture the Havana was restored to Spain, which gave rise to a popular saying at the time that the expedition had been organized solely for the benefit of the Keppels.

From Havana we went back to New York by sea.

In the course of our wanderings we became acquainted with every side of American life. One feature of it never failed to strike me, and that was the *speed* at which Americans carry on their daily lives. No people in the world appear to me to hurry so constantly and so consistently as do the Americans. They are always *making haste*, whether to work, eat, or play.

One of the proudest boasts of an American city is that it is gridironed with car lines, and most American cities are entitled by fact to boast of this distinction. The demand for so many street cars proceeds from the desire of every citizen to move at top speed from one place to another. He has no time to walk, step it as lively as he may. Watch those same cars careering down the streets at express rate armed with fenders in front to pick up or throw to one side any stray pedestrian who happens to obstruct the way, and watch their passengers precipitating themselves—what they call "transferring"—from one car to another, in their efforts to reach a given point in the shortest possible time, and you will hardly be surprised at a remark I lately read in one of the annual reports of the Capital Traction Company to the effect that 217 of the unfortunate 403 persons injured that year would have escaped if they had not been in such a terrible hurry to board or quit their cars.

Further evidences of this American passion for hurry are to hand in the many quick-lunch shops that adorn the streets. Here busy men dash in, and consume, standing, enough food to help them go on hurrying for the rest of the day. Pursue your

TRANSLATION

Top line: 'No Contraband.'
Below: 'The great steamer *Lusitania* which was sunk by a German submarine, 5th May, 1915

TRANSLATION

Top line: 'Business before everything.'
Right hand: 'Cunard Line—Booking Office'

MEDAL STRUCK BY THE HUNS TO COMMEMORATE THE SINKING OF THE *LUSITANIA*

This ship sailed two days later than the anticipated date, and was torpedoed on 7th May. The medal is dated 5th May—two days prior to the tragedy—conclusively proving that the outrage was premeditated. The medal was hastily recalled by the German Government, and a new one issued with the amended date. Only a very few of the original issue (which having passed into Allied hands, and, therefore, beyond recall) are now extant.

way anywhere about an American town and note all the evidences of this curious characteristic of a race always seeking new methods to accelerate their natural locomotion; note all the time-saving devices at every citizen's hand—the telephone, the telegraph, wireless and with wires, even the megaphone and the tube for written messages. We have adopted some of these time-saving devices in England, but we are still very far behind our American cousins.

In New York, Americans hurry on two or three levels at once. So, whilst cars, carriages, motors and bicycles jostle and crowd and pass each other in the street, the overhead cars dash along the "elevated" railway, whilst the subway trains save time below. In the houses lining the streets the lifts or elevators ceaselessly toil up and down, carrying their closely packed crowd of driven human beings who no longer have time to walk up the stairs. Apropos of elevators, I cannot resist quoting a line from my old friend, Henry James, who, speaking of the quiet of a hospital in New York, remarked that it was as great as if "the passion of the elevated and of the elevator in especial were for ever at rest, and no one were 'stepping lively' for miles and miles away."

Another striking characteristic of this splendid race of men is their utter independence of privacy, or to put it more correctly, their love of publicity. They are the most gregarious people in the world, and are never really happy except when they are herded and *en évidence*.

In walking about American cities I was at first struck by the fact that all gardens are open to the street, even those of the biggest houses. I inquired

about this and was told that it is against the community spirit of America to enclose them except with an ornamental railing. Town dwellers find more pleasure sitting in their gardens if they can see and be seen from them; playgrounds in the heart of the cities are equally open and unprotected from the street. In the houses the same absence of privacy prevails. There are no doors to the reception-rooms. What an American really loves is that his gaze should be able to wander freely over the whole suite of State apartments from the drawing-room on the front through the big hall, which generally occupies the centre of the house, to the farther wall of the dining-room which forms its rear.

Though I received so many and such varied impressions during our many journeys, I still find it as hard to define America and the Americans as it would be to capture the reflected rays of a faceted diamond. For where in a comparatively new civilization does hospitality end and self-advertisement begin, where is the line to be drawn between justifiable ambition and social "climbing," when does the love of titles resolve itself into snobbishness?

One of the first things I felt in America, no matter in what social centre, was the disadvantage to hostesses of having no traditions to fall back upon. We do not realize in the dear Old World, until we see in America the embarrassment caused by the absence of it, how entirely we depend on time-honoured custom for reference and comparison.

Whatever may be the case with the younger of London's "smart set," who are rapidly transforming our old grey city into a bad imitation of New York,

older hostesses in England still play the society game with respect for its ancient rules. Hedged in by custom and supported by tradition, they have an inexorable standard by which to judge of their actions. "Never need pecuniary power beat its wings in the void and look round for the charity of a hint as to whether it is flying too high or too low for good taste." All that was settled long ago.

But in America there is no way of measuring the social fitness of things. Each hostess is a law unto herself. And thus it is that feminine rivalries are born, and necessity arises to outdo one's neighbour, a necessity which betrays American hostesses into extravagances often bordering upon and sometimes overstepping the limits of good taste.

Nevertheless, although lacking in that subtle undefinable quality which distinguishes our older civilizations in Europe, there is much to be said in praise of American Society, which in many respects gains by the courage which it shows in heaving overboard such dull customers as "old fashion" and "respectability."

There is something very thrilling, too, in belonging to a "smart set" which may in one week be reduced from 400 to 70 by the arbitrary wave of a hostess's pen. That happened in New York in November, 1905, on the occasion of Prince Louis of Battenberg's visit, when old Mrs. Astor, the admitted leader of society, thinned out her invitation list to suit the capacity of her dinner-table. The survivors of that drastic cut were known henceforth as "Mrs. Astor's elect." Many formerly prominent women thereby suffered social eclipse. They probably came to Europe, where the charming adaptability which distinguishes

women of their country would promptly gain for them the footing in society which their own country denied them. Those in New York and Washington who remained that night within the charmed circle were accepted from that day as constituting absolutely the highest social grade of New York. Imagine the feelings of London Society if the Lord Chamberlain suddenly took it into his head to act in so arbitrary a fashion. He would have the whole of Dodd's peerage and the united forces of the College of Heralds to face. It would provoke a scene worthy of "Alice in Wonderland"!

In New York, if I may venture to say so, one is always aware of the social striving of women. One sees the wheels whirring that keep the clock going. In a city so ostentatiously rich they *must* outdo each other in their entertainments to gain and hold the first place as hostesses. There is nothing New York loves so much as the entertaining of a real live Prince from U-rope. Nor is a lesser foreign light, in the shape of a Duke, or even a "stranger of distinction" to be despised. When the advent of such a one is announced in the Press, the first question, of course, is with whom shall he stay? Letters of introduction brought or forwarded by himself sometimes settle this point, and this is indeed the happiest solution, for without it many a female friendship would be wrecked on the rock of hospitality. Failing that, however, one lady cleverer than the rest generally outmanœuvres her sisters and secures the "Prince" (I call him so for want of a better name). The next thing is to "entertain" him. Lists are consulted and ruthlessly cut down (*vide* Mrs. Astor's). Then the telephone begins to work. Oh, how anxiously

that telephone bell is being listened for, especially by aspirants to social pre-eminence whose position is still undefined, but whose value may be finally determined by inclusion in these parties!

"My dear, are you free on the tenth?" comes the airy question of the hostess, swelling with the pride of patronage, to the invitee at the other end of the wire, trembling with eagerness yet trying not to seem too keen. "I'm not quite sure, dearest; hold the line one moment, I'll consult my book!" And all the time "dearest" knows exactly what this little comedy means, and that "my dear" has kept the whole week free "on spec." in hopes of this very invitation, for did she not find herself a hundred times in the same position when she was scaling the social ladder?

Then, having collected her parties and organized for her guest as many luncheons, teas, dinners, suppers, operas and balls as he can squeeze into the period of his visit, the prospective hostess turns her thoughts to the adornment of herself and her house.

Hats and dresses are ordered in those wonderful Fifth Avenue shops for every separate occasion, and here the hostess has a distinct advantage over her rivals, for having arranged them herself, she knows precisely what these occasions will be and can secure the *very thing* for each.

The house is turned upside down and inside out, everything being done that may enhance the comfort of the guest, for American women are past masters in the art of entertaining and spare nothing to make their parties a success. Indeed, entertaining in New York is attended by a display of luxury never surpassed in England even before the war.

I was once staying in a house during a royal visit,

and I can vouch for the fact that £2,000 worth of orchids and American Beauty roses were brought in for table and other decoration that week. Truly attractive is this American lavishness in the display of flowers. In that same house the walls of the dining-room had been rehung for the occasion with rose du Barri silk, and my attention was called by my host at dinner to the fact that the livery coats of the powdered flunkeys were cut from the same length of costly material, the clocks of their white silk stockings being embroidered in the form of the family crest, a stag's head surmounted by a crown. Could luxury go further?

All arrangements being completed, and the husband put out of sight, the crowning arrangement in many American houses, except at the dinner-hour, when he generally figures at the head of the table, the hostess trembling with excitement awaits the longed-for arrival. He comes in due course, so do the guests selected to meet him.

These, as I said before, are carefully selected, but on what grounds I am not quite certain, for I am not sure of the rules which govern social precedence in American Society. I am skating on rather thin ice in venturing even to allude to it, for as we all know, that little word "precedence" contains in itself all the potentialities of strife, anger and bitterness. The very word is to me what Mr. Henry James talks of somewhere as one of those terrible traps to memory baited with the cheese of association, for it recalls to my mind the curious fact that, though Americans affect to despise rank and titles, yet nowhere in the world are people such sticklers for precedence based upon some fanciful claim to go first. (I say

fanciful, for since in a Republic all are or should be equal, and there is no real reason for one going before another, such a thing as a claim for precedence must necessarily be more or less fanciful.) I think Americans themselves are beginning to feel this, and it is probably some instinctive need for an *échafaudage* of rank upon which to pin their claim to go first that makes them go in so largely for Associations, membership of which more or less solves the problem, I suppose. I latterly came across an old-fashioned book from which I gathered the following list of names of such Associations. It may be that some at least were founded to supply a long-felt social need. It may also be that some of them have ceased to exist. There were "Daughters of the American Revolution," "Colonial Dames of America," the "Aztec" Society, the "Social Order of Foreign Wars," the "Children of 1812," the "Grand-daughters of the American Revolution," the "Society of Mayflower Descendants," the "Royal Order of the Crown," the "Circle of Holland Dames of the New Netherlands," and last, but surely not least, the "Baronial Order of Runnymede."

But to return to my point, which was the arrival of the "Prince." Upon his introduction to his hostess and her friends follow hours, not to say days, when the favoured guest would be less than human were he not touched and charmed by the true kindness and hospitality lavished upon him. American women are proverbially smart, good-looking and agreeable, and when they lay themselves out to please, he must be fastidious indeed who could fail to be delighted with them. And he will be really amused too by the entertainment provided for him if he has those ines-

timable qualities of youth and enthusiasm with which we will endow him for the purpose of this sketch. For the amusements open to him will include in the first place the opera, the best opera in the most beautiful house I know! And this brings me to an invariable feature in American hospitality, namely the prominence accorded in it to the opera. Mr. Henry James, whom I never can resist quoting, calls the opera in New York the great vessel of social salvation, the comprehensive substitute for all other conceivable vessels.

A woman who really knows how to play her social part times her arrival there to correspond with an *entr'acte*, and has the satisfaction of making a sensation as she settles herself beside her guest under the collective gaze of the house. And the opera house lends itself admirably to this effective entry. With us a box in a theatre gives a feeling of privacy which we much value; with Americans a box would halve their pleasure if it confined their power to see and be seen. In the Metropolitan Opera House in New York no hampering walls of any kind exist, nor even shielding curtain, but the eye wanders unrestrained round the brilliant circle of misnamed boxes on the parterre of the house, and if so minded one has but to lean over the dividing rail to speak with one's neighbours. And this brings me to speak of another curious feature of New York opera, namely the toleration of *talking* all through the performance, however good it may be, and however large a figure the star performer may command. If one is a lover of music, one must be prepared to suffer from this characteristic feature of New York opera.

But as our stranger of distinction is probably an

average young man he will be content to look about him and to revel in the vision of some of the best-looking and most smartly turned out women in the world, arrayed in the costliest of furs, decorated with the most dazzling of jewels.

American women, on their own confession, do not always attend a First Night for the sake of its musical thrills alone. They are there to see and be seen! Everybody's dress and jewels come in for a share of their interest.

Even the appearance in the house of so unimportant a person as myself, when we were in New York, was sufficient to distract their attention. "Had enthusiasts bid eighty to ninety dollars for a pair of seats that they might hear Plançon, or to dissect Lady Susan Townley's costume and estimate the number and cost of her jewels?" reproachfully queried one journal after a more than usually talkative First Night.

But to return to our "Prince." He will lunch and dine every day at magnificent private houses full of *objets d'art* and Old Masters, and if, in these splendid palaces, he feels about him the atmosphere of a Museum or Art Collection, rather than that of home, to which in similar surroundings he is accustomed on his own side of "the pond," he must blame himself rather than his kind hostess.

He will be taken to the play also, which in my opinion he will find less well staged than in London, and will wind up his evenings supping with his gay hostess and her friends at one of the many first-class restaurants. Or he will dance in private houses with the most exquisite dancers in the world, for nearly all American women are fairies in their dancing-slippers.

Could the "stranger of distinction" fail to enjoy himself in New York?

I don't know why I have wandered off into a dissertation on American hospitality, good as it is, except that that same hospitality strikes me as one of the most marked of American characteristics and is bound to impress agreeably anyone fortunate enough to arrive in New York or Washington with credentials which will ensure him an experience of it.

Having described American women and their charms, I come by a natural transition to talk of American men in general and American husbands in particular, as they appear to the average tourist in the States. In England we have all met those American ladies who, having in many cases climbed out of quite humble surroundings in some small city in the West or elsewhere, have continued climbing via Newport and New York, till their wise climbing carried them across the ocean to London, where we take every woman on trust, provided she be pretty and witty. These ladies are almost invariably minus their husbands, and are almost equally invariably good-looking, well-dressed and wealthy. They take a house and entertain, or they live at the most expensive hotels and *are* entertained, and from them we learn most of what we know of the American man. The impression we gather is that for some reason unexplained he is quite inferior to his female partner; he cares only for the chase of the elusive dollar, and prefers to stay at home and make it rather than be dragged abroad by his wife. But that is not the impression I formed of him when I went to America. With the one exception of the New York "idler," than whom no man in America is a greater failure, for it takes centuries

of cultured leisure to make a successful idler, the American man is superior in a great many qualities both of heart and head to the American woman. His weak social point lies in the fact that, in New York anyhow, he allows himself to be reduced to a state of bondage by the exigencies and the selfishness of the pretty tyrant who needs money to spend on her yearly conquest of England, or should I say Europe! His nose is constantly kept to the grindstone; I have heard him alluded to as "the purse," and his chief social function seems to be that of signing cheques in her favour. With him it appears to be all give and no take, and having given all, he is not even allowed a fair share of the amusements that his money will buy. He apparently counts for nothing in his house and is not expected to appear when his wife is entertaining, unless the entertainment happens to be a dinner. A wife is seldom seen in public with her husband except when he accompanies her to some reception. A man once described himself to me as "a tin kettle tied to a mad dog's tail." For where his wife went he had to follow, and his social cue had to be taken from her, extravagant as it might be. The counting-house and the club are his social centres, and there, if he is wise, he will spend the chief part of his life. This is the impression I formed in New York. In Washington, things were very different, for there brains count, and politics, not the purse, are the ruling factor. In Washington, American husbands assume their proper place in the social scale. For them the White House and Embassies open their doors and hostesses give their parties. Called to the capital from all parts of the country, promoted to their representative positions on account

of their cleverness, ambition and influence, they bring with them their bourgeois wives trained to revolve contentedly round the lords of creation. The political world of Washington may be more strenuous and less polished than that of New York, but it nevertheless represents quite as true a type of modern America, and its greater simplicity and sincerity make a distinctly more sympathetic appeal than does New York with its feverish gaiety.

Be it remembered I am talking of society only in both cases, and of a society that may have changed greatly since it figured in my diary.

During one of our visits to New York the Commissioner of Police offered to show us the "down under" side of the city.

One evening, therefore, towards midnight, we met at an appointed rendezvous. There were four of us besides our guide. I never laughed so much as when I surveyed my companions ready for the start. The Chief Commissioner had told us we must be very careful to disguise ourselves, so as not to attract attention in our night expedition to the Bowery. Lord M—— certainly looked his part in a villainous orange tweed suit he had borrowed from somewhere, with trousers rolled up, a dirty white scarf round his collarless neck and an old Homburg hat. Lady M. and I wore shirt waists that had seen better days, and Walter wrapped himself in an old Burberry coat and pulled a tweed cap well down over his eyes.

Thus disguised, we started off with the Police Commissioner to visit a drinking-saloon in the Bowery, the haunt of thieves whom he described as the lowest criminals in New York. "For heaven's sake, be careful," he whispered to us as we pushed open the

door to enter, "don't any of you speak. They would get suspicious if they found out from your accent that you were foreign, and there might be a row."

He had arranged with one of his officers to keep a little table clear for us, and we went and sat down and he called for beer. We kept our eyes open as we drank and he talked in a whisper, pointing out the various criminals. "Every man in this room," he said, "is a marked man. We know all about him. That one is a forger; that one has just been released after serving a long sentence for robbery with violence; that fellow over there was a receiver of stolen goods; that brutish-looking chap kept an opium den. But, take care, they are beginning to notice us."

And so indeed they were. First one and then another rose from his table or corner and sauntered over to where we sat. They stood watching us, evidently wondering, and I could see the P.C. was getting uneasy, when Lady M., who had a beautifully trained voice, suddenly began to sing with dramatic action suited to her audience.

They were spellbound, those criminals, and for a time stood open-mouthed, listening, but little by little one could see them beginning to reason and suspect. They edged nearer to us.

"Time to go!" whispered the Commissioner. "Slip away quickly. I will join you outside in a moment."

Presently he came out. "I didn't quite like it," he said. "If they had found out you were there to look at them it might have been ugly. Now come, and I will take you to the Chinese quarter."

Here we visited the opium dens—foul, ill-smelling places, with groups of Chinese lying about smoking the fatal pipe and trying to get to the stage of De

Quincey's dreams. In bunks, ranged round the walls like berths in a ship's cabin, lay others, already sleeping off the effects of the noxious drug. One might have been in the heart of China, in the Foochow Road of Shanghai. Upstairs was a much sadder sight, for here young girls and women were being initiated into the mysteries of the drug habit.

"I can show you Britishers a worse sight even than this!" said the Police Commissioner, "if you come along with me." He took us to another street and into a great dingy building with a long flight of stairs, on which a group of Salvation Army lasses were singing at the top of their voices. The stairs were badly lighted with oil lamps.

We came to a door on a landing, which the Commissioner opened. "The woman in this room," he said, pausing with his hand on the door knob, "is a countrywoman of yours. She's living with a Chinaman. Although quite young, I give her seven months more. I know the signs. She's killing herself with opium."

He pushed the door open and we entered. On a Chinese k'ang (that Chinese brick platform, with a fire under it, on which the Chinese make their bed) lay a woman half-dressed, with a tray by her side on which was spread all the paraphernalia of the opium-smoker. The room reeked of the smell. The woman's hair fell about her shoulders.

As we entered, she staggered to her feet, and with a terrifying volley of curses inquired what we had come for. My companions retreated in haste, but I was so struck by the sight of that woman's face that I could not go. I begged the Commissioner to leave me with her a few moments, and shutting the door I remained standing with my back to it.

"Are you one of that psalm-singing lot?" she yelled at me. "Get out of this. I've no use for you."

"No," I said, "I'm not here to preach to you, but only to pay you a little visit, as we are countrywomen; mayn't I sit down for a moment?"

She hesitated, but presently made grudging room for me.

I spoke to her gently, asking her if she wasn't tired of New York and if she wouldn't like to see the green fields of England again. Had she no mother or sisters she could go home to? If so, I thought I was influential enough to make things easy for her. I would take her away and send her to her mother. I talked on, longing to help, not knowing what to say! The poor thing looked at me in a dazed sort of way. Her anger had passed; she no longer seemed to resent my presence, but when I mentioned her mother she gave way suddenly and sank down on the bed, convulsed with sobs.

"Oh, my mother, my mother," she moaned. "If I thought that she knew what had happened to me, I would kill myself."

And then, little by little, she told me her pitiful story. She had come to New York as an emigrant, seeking work. She had been young, pretty, full of the joy of life, and she had found work as a clerk in a bank. But the manager cast his evil eye on her. For a time he treated her as a plaything, but tired of her and turned her on the streets.

"What was I to do?" she moaned. "I had no friends; I was ruined, disgraced, and did not know where to turn. Then a Chinaman came along. He saw me in the street, crying. He said, 'Come with

me and I will teach you to forget.' I have been here ever since, and here I will remain until I die. At least he was kind to me and gave me a roof over my head when the other turned me out—and I have got the opium! I know it won't be long, but I want no other home now."

I had at last to come out of that room and close the door on that piteous wreck. It was one of the saddest experiences of my life.

The U.S. Administration when we were in Washington was an extremely interesting one. Mr. Roosevelt was President, Mr. Taft was Minister of War, and Mr. Elihu Root Secretary of State. As my husband was in charge for a time during the absence of our Ambassador, Sir Mortimer Durand, we saw a good deal of them.

The President had a magnetism about him few could resist. He was full of that quality which the French call *joie de vivre*, and appeared to put his heart and soul into whatever he was doing. He was a very keen walker, and nothing pleased him more than to settle a knotty point in an international question by getting the Ambassadors to discuss it while they "footed" it together in the Rock Creek Park.

His enthusiasm was unbounded and his impetuosity almost equalled that of the ex-Kaiser. In fact, he sometimes struck me as being almost too impetuous for a great statesman. I once sat at dinner next a prominent American, and he summed him up according to his idea in a very few words. "Mr. Roosevelt," he said, "is an animated impulse. His brainwaves cause an atmospheric disturbance without conveying a message."

His wife was a charming woman, and will be kindly remembered by those whom she entertained so pleasantly at the White House. Her daughter Alice was more like her father—another "animated impulse." When we first went to Washington she had just returned from her royal progress round the world with Mr. Taft's party. During the course of it "Princess Alice," as she came to be generally and affectionately nicknamed, received tremendous adulation wherever she went. Her minutest comings and goings were criticized and chronicled, her clothes were copied, her manners were discussed, even her slang phrases passed into current use, and the shade of blue which she liked was named after her. "Alice blue" for a time was the rage in the United States.

Mr. Taft, Minister of War, afterwards President in succession to his great friend Roosevelt, was the most charming of men, the friend of everybody. An amusing incident I must here relate in which both were concerned.

There was at that time a journalist in Washington who had never lost a chance of attacking the Administration. His method was to look out for a scandal, or a supposed dereliction of ministerial duty, and to marshal the facts concerning it till his chance came to make it the subject of an attack in Congress upon the President and his colleagues. At that time the Panama Canal was being built, and we made a trip there to see the workings. At Colon we heard from the British Consul that this journalist had arrived and was, as usual, busily employed pickling a rod for the Administration.

It appeared that the water-supply in Colon was admittedly bad, and that no orders had been given

to remedy a state of things which was a real danger to the workmen employed on the canal. So our friend started to make out his charge. According to him Colon was "an unsanitary hog-wallow," with no proper water-supply. Ordinary precautions against the grave danger to the labourers arising from this source had been neglected, while ridiculous provision, indicative of midsummer madness, had been made for their comfort by stretching an awning over a quarter of a mile long to protect their heads from the rays of the tropical sun while they worked. Finally he filled a bottle with the water, and carried it off to Jamaica to have it tested there by the British Government analyst with the idea of afterwards producing this *pièce de conviction* in confirmation of the charges he intended to make.

I was quite distressed to hear of this trouble brewing for the President and Mr. Taft, and, as we were also going on from Colon to Jamaica, I begged Walter to let me take a bottle of the same water to be tested by the same man, thinking that our friend would exaggerate his Report and be confounded by the production of mine.

Alas! when the Report reached me later in Washington it was *so bad* that my proposed line of defence there and then fell to the ground! "Unfit for human consumption" was the damning writing on the bottle. In a letter accompanying this verdict, the British analyst proposed a system of filtration through gravel which would make the water innocuous until a more radical cure could be effected. I passed on his letter to Mr. Taft.

The sequel was amusing. The journalist brought his terrible charge against Mr. Taft, who, rising to

reply, blandly agreed with all he said, but added that the Government, on the suggestion of so eminent an authority as the British Government analyst in Jamaica, had taken remedial measures which were proving most effectual!

A few days later we lunched at the White House. I sat between the President and Mr. Taft. In the middle of luncheon Mr. Roosevelt leaned across me and, in his unconventional way, addressed Mr. Taft: "I say, William, just get me a telegram you will find in the pocket of my coat hanging up outside." Mr. Taft went as he was bid and returned with a telegram, which the President handed to me. It was from Colon to say that the sanitary improvements were in hand and the gravel filter-beds made. "You see how greatly we are in your debt, Lady Susan," said Roosevelt. "You must let us know if ever we can do anything for you."

Months after, a young American of our acquaintance came to see me. He was ambitious and clever, but having no influence felt he would never get on. I remembered the President's words, and wrote to remind him of them, asking if he could not do something for our young friend. A little while after we heard that he had appointed him to a good post in the Far East. Thus did I get my reward.

The official Receptions at the White House appeared very quaint to those who assisted at them for the first time. Everybody went who wanted to go, and there was a go-as-you-please atmosphere about the whole entertainment that seemed ultra-democratic to us Europeans. The guests wore morning or evening dress according to choice. But Mr. Roosevelt, standing with Mrs. Roosevelt behind a red rope stretched

from the door across the large drawing-room at the White House, in which these receptions were held, was on these occasions more than imperial in manner. We all filed past them, shaking hands with the President—in at one door, out at the other. Afterwards people collected in a further drawing-room and stayed talking in groups while refreshments were handed round.

One cannot live long in America without discovering that one of the essential qualities making for social success in that country is publicity. One must catch the eye of the Public, a smart woman must figure daily in the fashionable Press. We are getting rather like that in England nowadays. Shortly after our arrival in Washington, I unwillingly, and to my cost, achieved that object.

Day and night, American journalists on the quest for sensational paragraphs rang me up on the telephone. Not yet having entered into the spirit of this friendly invasion of the privacy of life, I resented it and, mistaking for intrusion what I afterward discovered to be a warranted licence, I was unfortunate enough to offend a horrible little society paper at the very outset of my stay in America by "pulling the leg" of one of its reporters. He annoyed me by getting me out of bed after midnight to inquire on the telephone whether I intended to entertain in America, and if so, what form my entertainments would take.

On the spur of the moment I answered that I thought of continuing in America my series of "Octaves."

"What are they?" queried the puzzled reporter. "Surely," I said, "you can't be so behind the times in this country as never to have heard of 'Lady

Susan's Octaves.' Why, they are known and discussed all over Europe!"

"Indeed! This is most interesting. Please tell me about them," begged the excited pressman, scenting a sensational paragraph for his paper.

So I told him about them! "Oh, my Octaves," I said airily, "are merely little dinners of eight given every eight days to eight selected guests. Eight viands are served and eight wines drunk, whilst the eight chief topics of the moment are discussed. I am surprised that you have not heard of them over here." I was merely chaffing, of course, but in a country where all sorts of social extravagance is the rule my nonsense was taken at its face value and the rumour of the coming Octaves was spread. When it was discovered that I had been "fooling" one of the clan of reporters, they doubtless resolved to get back on me, to use one of their own favourite expressions, and in this direction achieved "some" success.

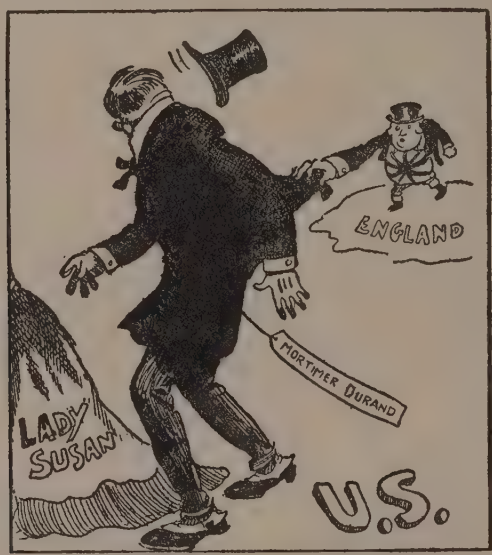
From that day they never spared me, and I became the constant butt for their gibes and comments.

I had a severe motor accident in Washington, which left me unconscious for many hours with concussion of the brain.

The sympathetic reference made to this incident in the Press was that "spritely Lady Susan had received a salutary lesson." This would not have mattered had not advantage been taken of the occasion to start a cruel and perfectly baseless rumour to the effect that I did not get on with my *chef-esse* Lady Durand, wife of the Ambassador, Sir Mortimer, whose recall from his post I was said to be plotting.

Paragraphs like the following constantly appeared:

"Lady Susan is a thorn in the side of Lady Durand. It is not causing deep sorrow that the hated rival is eclipsed for the nonce." This was at the time of my accident. Or again: "She (Lady S. T.) declines to walk into dinner after Lady Durand, who is the daughter of a Church of England curate. She disdains also



"PETTICOAT" INFLUENCE.

(Amongst other things, I am credited with having "wangled" the recall of the British Ambassador.)

to play second fiddle to the wives of Senators or any mere Commoner, and Washington hostesses are in despair."

They immortalized my social ambition as a would-be leader of fashion, publishing a caricature of me as an over-dressed puppet, dragging along two marionettes at the end of a string. Underneath this work of

art figured the legend, "Lady Susan leads the fashion."

Other tit-bits such as the following were offered to the American reading public: "Lady Susan allows her wit to flow unrestrained—American institutions generally stimulate her conversational attractiveness. A dinner-party was astounded recently by a remark of hers that the greatest circus in America was the White House." I was credited also with saying of two well-known Senators that "their toothpicks alone would keep them out of the homes of even the middle classes of England."

Such bad taste would not have mattered had not *The Times* in England seen fit to take up the matter. They published an article from their own correspondent in Washington in which, referring to our Ambassador's retirement, the words occurred: "*The Springfield Republican*, one of the most trustworthy and influential newspapers in this country, says that Lady Susan Townley must share with the President the doubtful honour of having caused the retirement of Sir Mortimer Durand."

This was too much even for my long-suffering husband, who was beginning to tire of this Press campaign against his wife in a country in which, as a member of the *corps diplomatique*, she ought to have been *immune* from such attacks. He asked and obtained leave to go home and there approached the Foreign Office with a view to their taking up the matter officially. A leading lawyer in the States had assured us that we could get record damages if we chose to bring an action for libel against some of the papers concerned. But the Foreign Office *advised* my husband to do nothing, and this advice he was obliged in his official position to accept!

CHAPTER X

The Argentine

Racing in the Argentine—"The wickedest city in the world"—The prudishness of Argentine women—Love-making as it is done—A delightful visit to a great *estancia*—A remarkable Devonshire family and how the father of it was tamed.

TO reach the Argentine, which is only a little over 6,000 miles from home, takes twenty-one days of comfortable and leisurely travelling, but if the great steamship companies would consent to run fast tourist steamers from London, the great city of Buenos Ayres could easily be reached in two weeks.

We were in "B.A.," as it is familiarly known to its British friends, for over four years, and during that time got to know and like it well. It is in extent and population not only the premier city of South America, but, after Paris, the premier city of the Latin world. Our first days after arriving there on Christmas Day, 1906, were spent in exploring our new surroundings.

The opera house, called the Teatro Colon, one of many beautiful buildings in Buenos Ayres, is probably the largest theatre in the world, and equipped most luxuriously. The musical performances are first class, as all the European "star" artists visit the Argentine capital and receive remuneration which even in a land of millionaires is startling.

Calle Florida, the Bond Street of Buenos Ayres, contains the jewel of the town, the magnificent and wealthy Jockey Club, perhaps the finest club-house in the world. The magnificence of this building, with its wide, pillared, green marble staircase, its luxurious banqueting-rooms (the furniture of one of these was taken over in its entirety from an old French château), its library, Turkish baths, fencing-hall, gymnasium, and roof garden, must be seen to be appreciated. The entrance fee is £300, and when we were in Buenos Ayres there was some talk of raising it still higher to try, if possible, to cope with the numbers of aspirant members. The income of the club is enormous, depending as it does not only on the race-course, but also on the takings of the *pari mutuel* at the bi-weekly meetings at Palermo.

Practically everybody attends the races, and probably everybody present has a bet on each of the seven races on the card. Racing is one of the most delightful pastimes of this gay city. Some of the best of our English thoroughbred sires have found their way to Buenos Ayres, notably Diamond Jubilee, belonging to Mr. Correas; Val D'Or, owned by Mr. Saturnino; Unzue, Cyllene, bought by the Ojo de Agua stud; Craganour, by Mr. Martinez de Hoz. Huge prices are given for these horses. When Ormonde went to the Argentine he fetched the then record sum of £30,000.

The Avenida Alvear, the drive from the town to the race-course, is a broad, shaded avenue through the Hyde Park of Palermo, flanked, when it is clear of the town, by green lawns and brilliant flower-beds. The crowd of vehicles of all kinds that congests the road on a race day beggars description.

The race-course at Palermo is the last word in luxury. The buildings, all white in their setting of green, are very attractive, and the Jockey Club stand, chiefly made of white marble, is the most sumptuous building of the kind I have seen in any country.

Indeed, racing in the Argentine is easier and more comfortably done than anywhere else in the world. One sits in one of the luxuriously furnished rooms at the back of the stand, or on the balcony when the time for the racing arrives, and one bets on the *pari mutuel* through one of the Jockey Club servants, who buys one's tickets, and afterwards collects one's money if one has been fortunate enough to pick a winner.

Then one sits and watches the parade of the horses, which, with their numbers plainly embroidered on both sides of their saddlecloths, walk past the stand and canter back to the starting-post. (An innovation lately introduced on English race-courses.) One can thus see the horses moving before betting, and can back one's own judgment. I was rather good at this, and once was lucky enough to pick out a winner at the handsome price of 270 to 1. I believe that was a record.

The Argentines are a very sporting people, and it is probably this inborn feature of their character which has attracted so many British people to their country. Football is a favourite pastime with them—also rowing. A fashionable rowing centre called the Tigre, a summer resort about twenty miles from the city, has been called the Henley of the Argentine, and anyone who has witnessed the brilliant scene and vast crowds at the annual regattas there must admit that the description is not inept.

Cricket and golf are making great strides. First-class polo is played, not only in the vicinity of Buenos Ayres, at Palermo and the English Club called Hurlingham, but all over the country. Nearly all the principal *estancias* have their polo teams, and many interesting meetings are held. Followers of the game in England will probably remember the successes at Ranelagh, Roehampton and Hurlingham of the Argentine teams "Wild Horse Ranch" and "Baguel," in which figured such names as Scott-Robson, Traill, and Schwind. Soon genuine home-bred Argentines will take their place in the polo world.

Tennis, hockey, boxing and fencing are also favourite pastimes of the Argentines, who take even their games seriously, and for practically all their sports have the services of English professional trainers.

Argentine women are extremely beautiful, with dark hair and velvet eyes to match. They dress very well, and get most of their wardrobe in Paris, that beloved second home of most of them, from which they are seldom absent more than a year at a time. I am speaking, of course, of the wealthier women. They have the Southerners' charm also, and are so hospitably inclined that they carry out almost to the letter the ideal hospitality of the old Spanish hidalgo typified in the words still so generally heard in the Argentine, "Mi casa es a su disposicion" ("My house is at your disposal").

Argentine women are famed for their magnificent jewels, even in such bejewelled social centres as Paris and London. Yet in Buenos Ayres these jewels are seldom *en évidence* even at the opera. The

reason is that, being so valuable, their care necessitates precautions which are difficult to take in a town where much that is primitive still exists and where burglars and bad characters escaped from Europe abound. The ladies prefer to have their beautiful jewels in the safe keeping of a London or Paris bank, where they can easily be claimed on their owners' arrival in Europe. Another cause for this habit is to be found, I think, in the very damp atmosphere prevailing in Buenos Ayres during a long portion of the year. This makes it difficult to keep the jewels as brilliant and brightly polished as we keep them in England. Dimmed jewels lose half their charm. Even the United States women must give points to the Argentines in the matter of diamonds and pearl necklaces.

The Argentine Señora relies much upon artificial help for enhancing her natural charms. I remember it was at dinner in the restaurant of one of the smartest Buenos Ayres hotels that I saw for the first time what has now become, alas! a common sight at our own dinner-tables, namely, a society woman taking out her mirror, powder-puff, and lip-salve to "titivate" her face between two courses. This was in the year 1908, and it was the first time I had ever seen it done at home or abroad.

That a custom now so universal in some circles should have shocked me so genuinely at the time shows how much society manners have changed in the last few years. I remember speaking of this little incident to an Argentine woman who had been present (with some irony, I admit, as she was herself highly "got up"), and I recollect still with a smile the ingenuous answer she made: "Oui, chère madame,

c'etait vraiment choquant! Ma chère mère m'a toujours dit qu'il ne fallait toucher la figure qu'avec le coude!"

It amused me at the races to meet a really smart woman with fair curls one day and auburn locks the next. But I was told that this was a licence permitted to women in that country where, until a short time before, the "fringe" had formed part of the hat, these being attached to each other and combined to form the best colour scheme. This habit has passed away now and my Argentine friends, resting on their laurels as the best-dressed women in the world, will pardon my allusion to it.

I have heard it said that Buenos Ayres is the wickedest city in the world. So it may be for all I know, and I daresay it would not mind pleading guilty to so fashionable an indictment. But certainly I never saw anything of this, and I am quite sure that the Argentine woman in Society had no part in making this reputation for Buenos Ayres.

Argentine women are the best wives and mothers in the world, and have in this dual capacity only one fault—namely, that they spoil their menfolk and their children. At that they really do excel! The atmosphere of a Buenos Ayres "home" is quite delightful, and it is a pleasure to be admitted to its intimacy. But as for anything in the way of "fastness," I never knew a genuine case of it that was not socially ostracized in that country. The Argentine's wife is like Cæsar's, "above reproach," or she ceases to figure in the social gatherings of Society.

Indeed, my husband used to consider it rather a drawback that the ladies were too strait-laced to allow

him to frequent their charming society on the race-course or at their own tea-parties. Women cluster together at the races, and few are the men brave enough to break their magic circle. As for the "paddock," they are never seen there, the idea being that they ought not to expose themselves to the possible contact of the Longchamps "mannequin" type, who on their part are confined to that part of the race-course instead of being allowed, as with us, to flaunt their charms in the enclosures.

Marriages in the Argentine are to a great extent "arranged" as in France, and to me it appears that this often answers well and conduces to happiness. For the parents on both sides study the characters, disposition, and financial prospects of the couple, and so are admirably qualified to bring them together under the happiest auspices. But the young people ought to be left, I think, after the parents' blessing has been given, to become engaged or not as they please, and there should be no reflection on either party if, after nearer acquaintance, they fail to embark on matrimony.

In the Argentine, although marriages are often arranged on these lines, a curious latitude is given in one respect which makes courtship in that country unique. At the opera or in a big theatre or other place of entertainment the custom is for all the unmarried girls to be placed in the front row of the boxes, their parents and male friends sitting behind. This habit, which results in a very brilliant and delightful display of youthful charm, has an object which becomes apparent only when one notes the young men in the house, between the acts, leaning against the exits, staring these young women out of

countenance, sometimes even using their opera-glasses.

The young women, fully aware of the scrutiny they are being subjected to, and nothing loth, permit their gaze also to wander over the floor of the house, until the glance of one of them is suddenly "arrested" by a young man more well-favoured or pleasing to her than the rest. If the girl then allows her eye to be "caught," and the young man can hold it, there is *ipso facto* established between them what is known in the Argentine as *telegrafia sin hilos* (wireless telegraphy). Once the young man is satisfied that he has established this, he makes it his business to find out the number of the box in which the fair one sits, and having previously secured an older friend to accompany him in the probable event of his not knowing the family, he is introduced to the parents of the girl, who in their turn present him to her.

The two young people are then allowed to converse together alone. If, at the end of the entertainment, they wish to continue the acquaintance, the young man asks her parents' permission to call and pay his respects, and this being granted, he becomes a friend of the house and the acquaintance often ends in matrimony.

I never heard of this custom in any other country, and I think it must be of Spanish origin and must have much in it of the sentiment attaching to a balcony courtship in fair Granada.

The national trait of "hospitality" was carried, in our case, to its finest point by Don Miguel Martinez de Hoz and his charming wife, who entertained us for one whole summer in their delightful home near Mar del Plata.

Don Miguel Alfredo is well known in English hunting, coaching and racing circles. He was educated in England, for which he has a great affection, so great that he and his wife, Doña Julie Helena, actually transplanted their home to London for seven years, so that their two boys should be entirely educated at Eton. It proves, I think, how very deep-rooted are the national traits in the Argentine character that these boys, brought over here young enough to begin their education at a private school, and kept here through an Eton and University career, nevertheless returned to their own country at the end of that time, having lost nothing of their national character and patriotism. Although they both speak English perfectly, and distinguished themselves at polo, being perfect horsemen, as most Argentines are, although they had made scores of friends here and could have lived in ease and luxury in the land of their education, they nevertheless returned with enthusiasm to the country of their birth, where they are now living on their vast *estancias*, helping their father, our original friend, to carry on the old traditions.

Chapadmalal, where we spent a happy summer as their guest, is admittedly one of the best of the *estancias* in the country. The Argentine, descended from Spanish hidalgos, has never mixed in business. His wealth in most cases comes chiefly from the land. He lives on it, as in the case of these friends of ours, in a manner more simple and economical than we do in England under much less favourable financial circumstances. So it is that the de Hoz, who are very wealthy, live in a patriarchal manner in a beautiful house built by themselves and filled with beautiful things, set down in a park belted by fir and eucalyptus

trees, but with no show whatever in the way of liveried servants and smart carriages.

The *estancia* covers 64,000 acres of land, 100 square miles, and is not far from Mar del Plata, the fashionable watering-place of the country. It took us a whole night's journey by train to get there from Buenos Ayres. We were met at the Mar del Plata station by an omnibus with four horses, and soon after leaving the town found ourselves on the outskirts of the Chapadmalal estate, whence a good twelve-mile drive lay before us to the house.

This drive was over a very wide grass track, very bumpy in places and hedged off with barbed wire from the immense grass lands on either side. A private telephone wire connected the *estancia* with Mar del Plata.

The whole country was slightly undulating, like the Berkshire Downs, and everywhere immense herds of horses, cattle and sheep wandered about apparently untended. Just as we were beginning to feel tired and hungry, we saw a big belt of fir-trees in the distance, which the driver pointed out to us as being our destination, and, soon after, we entered through a five-barred gate into a fine avenue of trees, which led us through a park up to the house itself, a charming white castellated villa. Our host and hostess were waiting on the doorstep to welcome us. We found ourselves in a quite English house, filled with lovely Queen Anne and Chippendale furniture, with English prints on the walls and a good wood fire blazing on the hearth.

So began one of the most delightful visits we ever enjoyed, even in the extensive and varied wanderings in many lands which has been our lot. We had

every variety of sport imaginable. One day we shot partridges and duck; another day we had some deep-sea fishing, for the *estancia* runs along the seashore; another day we mounted, and coursed hares.

We inspected fat pedigree cattle, prize shire horses, hackneys and sheep. We saw hundreds of breeding mares and polo ponies; we were taken to see the pedigree shire horse sires, all imported from England, the pedigree shorthorn bull, also imported from here, and the pedigree racing sires, among which figured Craganour.

The riding was what pleased me most. Don Miguel Alfredo had numberless thoroughbred horses for riding, all grass fed and all unclipped! Not smart if you like, but beneath a dirty, thick coat was a really well-broken animal. He tries all sorts of combinations in horsebreeding.

In one case the union between a hackney sire and a Shetland mare, both pedigree animals, produced a 12-hand pony with very big bone, immensely high action, and a sweeping mane and tail. Don Miguel drove four of these little beggars, who were very strong and pulled like the devil, in a double dogcart. He gave me my first lesson in four-in-hand driving, sitting behind them. He afterwards brought them to London. After being clipped and properly got up, they were as smart a little team in their double dogcart as one could wish to drive. I used often to have them out in Hyde Park, where they created quite a sensation.

The bulls were much more carefully tended as far as appearances went, especially those being got up for show. Their horns were trimmed, sand-papered

and polished, and they were washed every morning with a hose with soap and soft water, and afterwards brushed and combed. Don Miguel had a theory that rainwater made their coats more silky, and certainly they responded to the treatment.

Amongst many friends we made in the Argentine was a family of British *estancieros*, to visit whom we embarked upon a three days' ride from Neuquen, through a desert so hot that we suffered terribly in traversing it. The hospitable *estancia*, in which we stayed in comparative clover, having plenty to eat and a roof over our heads, belonged to four brothers who drifted into this part of the world with their father and mother as boys. The father must have been very eccentric. He was at one time a fashionable London doctor. He came of a Devonshire family and had possessed an annual income of £10,000, which he squandered. Eventually he married a charming, gentle and cultured lady, who possessed a highly developed artistic temperament, and was the author of many songs and verses which were at one time very popular. They lived for some time at Brighton, then in London, and four children were born, all of them boys.

Their education seems to have been the object of very misguided attention on their father's part, and his methods must have cost many a pang to their sweet mother. That the boys should be hardened was his main idea. In our days the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children would undoubtedly have stepped in to modify his system of education, but in those days he was left a free hand. To swim out to sea at Brighton clinging to the tail of a great St. Bernard dog, to be left on the Strand to the

care of the successive policemen on the beat for forty-eight hours, to be made to jump from any height on to the hard ground—such were his "hardening" methods!

Having run through all his fortune and lost his London practice as a consequence of some unfortunate spiritualistic experiment, which made much noise at the time and ended in the mysterious death of the medium, he decided to leave England with his whole family and start "treking" in South America. For this purpose he had four huge caravan wagons constructed and fitted up regardless of expense as kitchen, study and dormitories. Books and a piano were considered indispensable furniture, and all else was taken that might enhance the family's comfort.

Arrived in South America, they began their wandering life, moving at a slow pace, the wagons drawn by oxen and the caravan accompanied by spare horses and mules for riding purposes. Six huge St. Bernard dogs also formed part of this curious menagerie, and a bulldog so fierce that he eventually had to be destroyed as too expensive on account of the damages his fighting expeditions resulted in. Fighting cocks also were included, all these animals tending to indicate by their own savageness the nature of the man who headed this expedition.

For seven years the family wandered aimlessly at the beck and call of their leader. One of his peculiarities was that, having been for some part of his youth at sea, he had contracted certain nautical notions. He insisted, for instance, upon having the wagons drawn up north and south, and would not rest till they had been shifted by endless labour into the exact position required. One can imagine the irascible old man

stamping about in the dust, furiously directing operations, compass in hand, that his quaint whim might be satisfied. A pole then had to be erected from which the British Flag was flown. If the Argentine authorities resented this and requested that their national flag might be flown with it, he answered them furiously that he was an Englishman and that if they wished to lower his flag they had better come and do it.

The night was divided nautical fashion into watches, which the "peons" (camp servants) had to keep, the sons being officers of the watch and responsible for any failure of duty on their part. Their welcome at the *pueblos* (villages) they reached in the course of these wanderings was varied. At one place they would be taken for a travelling circus and received with the greatest joy; at other places the gravest suspicions were excited by so unusual a spectacle, and an armed reception was all that awaited them, blows being given and received in their efforts to establish a footing and obtain water and other necessaries. At other times they were given a grand official welcome as "strangers of distinction," and on these occasions would be received to the jubilant strains of the village band.

In conformity with the customs of the country, the four sons had to be turned into "gauchos" (rough-riders) capable of taming the wildest horse, and shifting for themselves in the tightest corners. In pursuance of this object they were placed upon untamed horses by their determined father and told to stick there. If they fell off, they had to climb back until they succeeded in sticking there; if they clutched the mane or tried to cling to the animal with anything but their legs, their stern parent, who stood by sjambok in hand, soon loosened their grip. Tears were not

allowed—at least no audible lamentation. "If you *must* cry," he would say, "let your eyes leak, but I must hear no sound!"

Imagine the feelings of the mother who looked on at this Spartan education, unable to interfere. Seven years passed thus, and this never-ending "trek" continued uninterruptedly through province after province. The boys were educated by tutors who for a short time joined the caravan and instilled into them what knowledge they could, but they seem to have been as wild as hawks.

At last the eldest of our hosts, Don Tomaso, grew to man's estate. He had begun this life at the age of fourteen, and was thoroughly sick of living in such gipsy fashion. He determined for his mother's sake, as much as for that of his brothers, that a change must be made. So he stood up to his father and boldly spoke his mind, announcing that he and his brothers were determined to run away sooner than continue to lead such a life, and that land must be bought somewhere, he didn't care where, and the family wagons anchored for good.

He expected to be annihilated by his enraged father, but to his great surprise the proposal was calmly accepted. "All right, Thomas, if you think so, I suppose it must be so," said the father. "You find the land and I'll find the money."

And he did find the land, in the very country where the family now prosperously presides over ten leagues of camp, the value of which has trebled since they bought it. A house (the old part of the one we stayed in) was built for the beloved mother who there peacefully ended her days, to be followed to the grave shortly afterwards by her eccentric husband, who

through all had tenderly watched over her, having twice nursed her back to life after she had been given up by the doctors. They both lie buried close to the *estancia* house.

Riding over the country in remote parts of the Argentine, one meets all sorts of curious and interesting types. I remember once that in the wilds about Neuquen we were cheered by a meeting with a character well known thereabouts, a very rich *estanciero* named Alezandro S., born in Chili, but naturalized in the Argentine. A characteristic story is told of how at the time of the Argentine-Chilian war scare a few years ago he went to the colonel in charge of a remount division of one of the belligerent armies and offered him 800 horses at a certain price.

"Right!" said the colonel, "but the price mentioned for the deal in my papers must figure at five dollars higher than the price you mention, the remaining sum being my commission."

"Not a bit of it," said old Alezandro. "If you are not patriotic enough to buy my horses at the price I name for your Government, making an honest deal of the matter, I shall cross the Cordillera and dispose of them to your country's enemies."

"You can't," said the colonel. "You would not find a market for them there!"

But the old man was as good as his word, and the matter, reaching the ear of the colonel's chief, resulted in a scandal which made a great sensation at the time. Such a man was Alezandro, whom we met on the road that day, booted and spurred with gold.

He was mounted on a beautiful black horse with a white star on its forehead, and followed by a *tropilla* (troop) of thirteen other horses exactly like his

own, the famous picked *tropilla* of *oscuros* (blacks) known throughout the country as belonging to this enormously rich and eccentric old man, who twice a year crossed the Cordillera between Chili and Argentina to visit his *estancias* in both countries. The personal "kit" of this travelling millionaire formed the light load of one mule, so simple is life in the Argentine "camp" and so few are the requirements of even the richest.

Riding trips, of which we made so many in the Argentine, give one a great idea of the vastness and scant population of this wonderful country. We rode once right across it from east to west, from Neuquen to a wonderfully beautiful lake called Nahuel Huapi in Chili. We covered a distance of 850 miles on horseback, which took us two months, during which we were all the time out of reach of a post office, except twice, when we came upon small *pueblos*, or collections of houses not amounting to a town. The only people we met in our long ride were connected with cattle, for the mountains are uninhabited, except by shepherds and cowherds in charge of the vast herds of cows and sheep, which pasture in the valleys and belong to the various *estancieros*, many of them English, who have elected to buy ranches in these fertile districts.

The only human habitations we struck were the *bolice* (a sort of "general stores"), which seems to flourish in the remotest spots. The wares offered for sale in them were few in number, but immensely high in price. They generally included wearing apparel, such as *bombachos* and *alpagatas* (a sort of canvas shoes), *yerba* for *mate* (the national tea), matches, bread, and occasionally whisky. Little else did they

provide, but they formed a centre and a common meeting-ground for the few inhabitants of these sparsely populated country districts, and travellers, few as they were, never failed to draw rein at their doors.

In the course of one of our journeys in the Andes, we came across two young Englishmen who were as fine types of English manhood as one would want to see. They were both twenty-three years old, and had elected to try their luck at *estancia* life together in this remote part of the world. Their beginning was ill-omened. A was thrown from his horse and fractured his leg very badly above the ankle. They were alone together in camp and knew nothing of surgery; they had not even the necessary materials out of which to make a bandage. But B managed to bind up his friend's injured limb, after which he decided to take him back to Buenos Ayres.

The journey was performed in a bullock-wagon and took twenty-three days. B nursed his friend devotedly during that trying time, besides driving the cart and doing the cooking. They reached Buenos Ayres, where A was conveyed to the British Hospital, there to spend five months on his back, while B hurried home to resume work on their *estancia*. As soon as he was able, A rejoined him, but with one leg considerably shorter than the other, so that he could only ride with difficulty, and there we met them, working away, full of courage and of hope, building magnificent castles in the air, having already pegged out their claim, so to speak, and stocked their couple of leagues with cattle.

Of such stuff are Englishmen made. And I am proud to bear witness to it, who have seen it not once, but many times, not only in the Argentine, but all

over the world, and in places quite retired from the light of civilization.

When one first starts wandering on horseback, as we did, in every part of the Argentine (I am talking now more especially of the south), it strikes one as incomprehensible that owners and breeders do not annually lose scores of cows and sheep, for the animals roam about, apparently ownerless and unrestrained, over vast tracks of mountain country measuring often a hundred miles or more in extent. Where a man's property abuts upon "fiscal" land (land belonging to the Government and waiting to be sold) the owner seizes advantage of this to let his horses, cattle and sheep run over that land also, so that, say a man's property covers ten leagues and adjoins a Government lot of the same dimensions, his animals may be found roaming over all that space. Yet comparatively few are lost, for owners constantly ride about driving them in towards a centre, where they can be counted.

I remember meeting a Welshman in charge of 3,000 cattle, who told me that he had never lost an animal. How he managed to arrive at this fact or to count them passed my understanding, until he explained to me that it is done by driving the animals through a narrow place past five or six men who check them in tens, the units being represented by pebbles and the tens by bigger stones, which they drop into their pockets as the cattle pass. Notes are afterwards compared to arrive at the correct result. They can count five or six thousand sheep in this way with practically perfect accuracy, and in a very short time. Cattle, of course, are much easier.

One of the features of camp life which bears hardest

on its votaries is the enormous distance from town, and the consequent solitude, broken only by the society of those who form its members.

Of course, in glorified *estancias* like Chapadmalal, the women solace the loneliness of spare hours by gardening, French novels and needlework. But under rougher conditions they have no leisure for reading —everything to do with children, cooking, and cleaning and the care of the "backyard" animals naturally falls upon the women in a country where there are no servants except of the expensive "imported" brand, and no man help, every available hand being at work outside.

Many an anxious hour must the mother and wife spend under such conditions. In moments of emergency, such as accidents to man or beast and cases of fire, she very often has to depend entirely on herself to save the situation.

I found that as regards health and "first-aid" the camp women—I am now speaking of the native so-called *estancias*—were extraordinarily ignorant. When we were in Buenos Ayres I got up a "first-aid" class to try and teach them what to do in sudden emergencies. But there appears to be a Providence that rules over these denizens of Argentina's vast spaces, and I do not suppose my classes really did much to help. They probably preferred their old reckless way, even if it did entail an enormously high percentage of infantile deaths.

In the Argentine nowadays one sees very little of the Indians, who were for a long time being systematically exterminated. Up in Jujuy, where we stayed with some friends of ours, the Leeches, who are great sugar growers and manufacturers, the Indians come

down every year to harvest the sugar canes. They have to be fetched from their village fastnesses by one of the Leech brothers, who goes up himself to invite them to come down to the *estancia*. They know and like him, and come at his bidding, doing their work well under his fatherly guidance and care. But they are very wild and fearful of strangers. If any one of them dies during the period of their service, the body is stuck up in the branches of a tree that the vultures may prepare the skeleton for removal home when the time comes for their trek back to their virgin forests. They are paid in "kind," preferring a yard of red flannel to a piece of money.

The English have always been very popular in the Argentine, where, fortunately, our record is a good one. The British *estancieros* are a credit to us. Scattered more or less all over the country, their dealings with the natives have been so honourable that *Palabra d'Ingles* (word of an Englishman) has become a current expression throughout the land. What greater compliment could be paid us as a nation?

CHAPTER XI

Bucharest

When Carmen Sylva was Queen of Rumania—What she did for her people—The beauty and charm of Princess Marie, now Queen of the Rumanians—Social life—Peculiar views of marriage—The Huns in Bucharest—Mr. Lloyd George on M. Clemenceau, and M. Clemenceau on Mr. Lloyd George.

AGAIN the scene of our lives shifted, this time from America to Europe, from Buenos Ayres to Bucharest, from a land of wide-ranged ranches peopled with "peons" to a land of proud peasants. My husband was transferred to the capital of Rumania as Minister Plenipotentiary for Great Britain in 1911.

At the Palace in Bucharest, shortly after our arrival, I was received by Queen Elizabeth, better known as Carmen Sylva, the *nom de plume* she adopted in later years. The room in which she sat was characteristic of herself. It was a study whose walls were lined with untidy books in shelves, books which had the appearance of being constantly handled. Her writing-table was shaped like a huge horseshoe, and on it were no fewer than three typewriting machines for the three different languages in which she composed.

The room opened out of her bedroom on one side. She told me that every day she was in the habit of rising between three and four in the morning to

write. She slipped on a dressing-gown, and at that weird and cheerless hour composed her best poems. The silence of the house and the creeping rose of the dawn inspired her. When I knew her she had just finished a philosophical work *in verse*, composed in these early hours.

Out of her study on the other side opened her music room, with a raised platform, on which were a piano, music stands, etc., ready for the concerts in which she delighted, for the Queen was passionately fond of music. All the artists of note who came to Bucharest were summoned to play here before her. Later, when the advancing stages of the painful malady of which she ultimately died forced her to keep to her room, she still indulged her passion for music, listening through the open door to the strains she loved. A few selected guests were admitted to share this pleasure. On these occasions we used to present our homage to the Queen lying on her sofa, dressed all in white, with a sort of glorified nun's head-dress in beautiful old lace framing her head and face. After kissing her hand, we retired to the auditorium, and she remained alone, with closed eyes, listening.

A third room opening from her study was occupied by her ladies-in-waiting.

Carmen Sylva in her best days must have been a wonderful woman. Even when we were in Bucharest, towards the end of her long career, she was most attractive.

She would have shone in any sphere of life that she chanced to be born into. She was so many-sided, so versatile. Intellectual, romantic and passionate as she was, there was another side to her

character which was of untold benefit to her country.

She loved Rumania and the Rumanians, and was never tired of talking of them. Especially in the women she took the greatest interest. She spoke to me often about them, knowing her subject intimately. In home life and work she found the best guarantee for their happiness and morality. These peasant women are not fitted for domestic service, she would say; they consider it derogatory. The proof of this lies in the fact that there are no Rumanian servants in Bucharest, that class all being drawn from Transylvania. "Oh, I have had a deal of trouble with the women of this country," she said. "They are so proud that in the old days I could not even get them to enter *my* service as maids of honour! The peasants used to reproach those parents who permitted such a thing. Daughters, they declared, should stay at home till they marry!"

So the Queen set herself to find work for them in their own homes. She started a large society for silk weaving, and as all Rumania grows silkworms unto the most northern parts of Moldavia, she hoped one day to see a weaving loom in every cottage in the country. Two weaving schools were opened in Bucharest, where peasant girls were taught this lucrative trade, and to each girl returning to her village, after her course of training, was given a loom.

The Queen took more interest in this home-weaving question than in any other, but here again she had to fight the curious prejudices of the women she endeavoured to help. They were too proud to sell the silk they made! When the Queen, anxious to provide a market for them, offered to buy all they

could produce, they were utterly disgusted, looking upon a sale of their handiwork as worthy only of the Jews. "I would sooner make silken robes for myself," said one, "than sell to others what I make for my own pleasure!" It was some time before they could be brought to view the matter in a different light.

The Queen also had to reckon with the prejudiced opposition of the landowners, who objected to the new industry because they feared it might gradually lead the country women to abandon field work. "I did not tell them," she said, "that one of my chief reasons for starting the industry was that it should have just that result! I wanted to reduce the number of valuable lives lost to the State through the mothers being kept such long hours in the fields."

There was no real want in Rumania before the war, so many societies having been started by the Queen for the relief of the unemployed. One of these kept 2,000 women at work, the product of their industry being sent to London and as far afield as America. Another gave homework to poor ladies—Rumanian Society women are wonderfully charitable, and the Queen told me of the great interest they take in their poorer sisters, whom they visit and care for. There are 300 charitable societies in Bucharest alone administered by women, and many of them do not know how the day goes, so hard do they work and so much have they to do to carry on their self-appointed task.

The Queen spoke with love of the country of her adoption. "I often regret," she said, "even necessary innovations like that of the silk-weaving, because it takes away something of the beautiful simplicity

THE QUEEN OF RUMANIA

of peasant life. It may also awaken a taste for luxury which previously did not exist in a civilization so primitive in form. I had a lot to learn before I stopped doing harm in endeavouring to do good," sighed Carmen Sylva, one of the most painstaking and devoted Sovereigns with whom a country ever was blessed, even after reckoning with the mistakes into which her very genius and originality may have led her.

During the several audiences Her Majesty gave me, she would sometimes lapse into a more intimate causerie, in which she revealed yet another attractive side to her versatile character—namely, her happiness in her home-life. She was a devoted wife to the late King, in spite of the fact that her romantic disposition occasionally led her into indiscretions in her younger days.

Speaking English fluently, she would tell me in her pleasantly modulated voice of the King and his great work for Rumania. And then she would give me charming glimpses into her own life with him. She told me how precious he was to her, and how when he was ill she would massage his tired limbs till her own hands ached. Every night they played Patience together when the affairs of State had been disposed of. "I order his dinner myself every day," she confided to me, laughing, "and I impose upon the *chef* a sense of the responsibility of his office. I tell him he is, after the King, the most important factor in the land, for the welfare of the State ultimately depends on him, he being responsible for the King's digestion!"

The present Queen, who was Crown Princess in the days when we were in Bucharest, was a great

contrast to Carmen Sylva. She lived at Cotroceni, an old monastery, just outside the town, which had been converted into a palace for the young heir to the throne and his wife. I remember how dazzled I was by her beauty when for the first time I saw her, radiant with youth, her beautiful head crowned by a glory of golden hair, standing in the middle of the reception hall where she received me.

This hall deserves some description, as, being her own work, it necessarily was the intimate expression of her fascinating personality. The general effect of it was Byzantine. The floor was tiled with turquoise blue, the walls heavily decorated with gilt stucco *motifs*, designed by herself, applied upon a shiny background of the same blue as the tiles.

The room, or rather hall, was broken up by monumental seats, cabinets and screens of carved and gilded wood. Immense tables, circular and topped with marble, were covered with Danish porcelain animals, of which Princess Marie was passionately fond. On the floor were spread priceless Oriental rugs, while the electric lights were concealed in big wrought-iron lanterns hanging from the lofty and vaulted ceiling.

The sofa on which the Crown Princess sat while she poured out tea was huge and square and gilt, heaped up with cushions of handworked Rumanian embroidery of every shade of red and purple.

The Queen had received me in her study; the Crown Princess received me in a Byzantine hall in which one instinctively looked round for a splashing fountain. The contrast in the homes of these two women was as curious and interesting as was the contrast in their interests. The Queen spoke all the time of poetry and other intellectual subjects, of

the evolution and progress of Rumania, of the social and moral condition of her people ; while the Princess's talk was of her friends, of sport, of the trouble she had had to "modernize" the Court a little.

The two women represented opposite poles of feminine interest, yet I suppose no two sovereigns ever were more beautiful and more fascinating, each in her own way. And the greatest affection existed between them. Queen Carmen Sylva spoke with evident pride of the Princess, though smilingly shaking her head over her partiality for riding out alone, and for roller-skating in the great covered hall where all Society on wintry afternoons collected to indulge in this favourite sport.

The Crown Princess honoured us several times by coming to the Legation. On the first occasion, when she and the Crown Prince dined with us, she came resplendent in jewels and wearing a most lovely gown. "See," she said, as I advanced to receive her in the hall, "I have made myself as beautiful as I could to come to England to-night. I consider this Legation a bit of my own dear country."

Queen Marie has remained essentially British,[1] although since the accession of her husband she has identified herself completely with Rumania, especially during the war. But one cannot help feeling that she must have had something of an apprenticeship to go through, being taken as a beautiful young girl of seventeen straight from the breadth and education of an English home to the trammels of a foreign, and what was, at that time, of course, a German, Court.

[1] She was Princess Marie of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh.

I said something of this to her one day, and she admitted that her early experiences had been hard, but "I am accustomed to it all now," she added, "and I love my adopted country. I have the satisfaction of being honestly able to say that if I had to choose I would do it all over again!"

The Crown Princess was most informal when entertaining small parties of her friends at Cotroceni. She was very gay in those happy pre-war days, loving her country life with her beautiful children round her, but at the same time never failing to carry out such tiresome public duties as always fall to the lot of the wife of the heir to the throne. Thus I remember attending a big charity concert over which she presided in a church (Greek). All the women of the *corps diplomatique* were invited to receive her, but for some reason no one turned up except myself.

The sanctuary, within the rails, was set apart for the Crown Princess, who occupied one of three big arm-chairs facing the congregation, with the Archbishop on her right, and myself on her left. The Crown Princess is extraordinarily beloved of the Rumanians, and as she subsequently moved around visiting the various stalls of the bazaar her progress was constantly impeded by those who pressed forward anxious to kiss her hand.

Rumanian social life is, in charm and intelligence, distinctly above the average, or at least it appealed to me as such, possibly on account of its very French character. French it is in all respects but one, and that is in the extraordinarily lax view the Rumanians take of the sanctity of the marriage tie. I might almost say that the possibility of divorce as a release

to her daughter from an unsuccessful marriage enters into the prenuptial calculations of the average Rumanian mother.

To my mind there is something abnormal, to say the least of it, in this view of married life. But this does not appeal to the Rumanians in the same way. A great friend of mine, and a charming woman, referred with pride to a case in which a man whose wife left him to marry his friend (the second marriage is often arranged before the first is broken off) not only restored to her her "dot" intact, but actually *doubled* it, to prove that he had been a faithful steward of her goods while in charge! "*C'etait un beau geste!*" said my friend. "He proved himself a perfect gentleman in a most difficult situation!"

The women are very intelligent, and, I think, would be better wives if the husbands were more faithful. As it is there are few happy marriages.

The social world, however, is very amusing, as Rumanians excel in the art of small talk. French is the universal language spoken, which makes it easy for a foreigner to become intimate with them.

Bucharest has great attractions besides its wonderful tea and bon-bon shops. One is the *Lautari*, or gipsy music, than which nothing in the world is more divine to dance to. These men are supposed to be the real gipsies, and they have such a wonderful ear for music that I have known them pick up a tune in a ball-room from a few notes whistled by some one present and play it off as a concerted waltz without any previous study at all. The Rumanians are so fond of music that I have more than once seen a young man dining alone at a restaurant signal to the first violin to come across to him, and for

the equivalent of a five pound note induce him to play actually *into his ear!*

The climate of Bucharest, especially in winter, was dreary in the extreme. During the winter we spent there we seldom saw a ray of sun, while underfoot we experienced for long weeks alternations of snow and thaw. But summer at Sinaia is glorious, when the long days can be enjoyed in the exquisite surroundings of that lovely spot.

In my diary I find the following entry made during the war, on October 12, 1918:

"I have just received a long and most interesting letter from an old friend of ours in Rumania, the statesman who made his country enter the war on our side and who is now an exile in London, having been impeached by the pro-German party who ousted him. He tells me many interesting details that do not appear in history, as, for instance, how the Huns treated his house in Bucharest, after he had fled from it, upon their victorious entry into the town. It appears that thirty men, under a non-commissioned officer, were especially told off to do the work of destruction. They pulled the old panelling off the walls of the rooms and sent it to Berlin. They then took hammers and knocked the decorative plaster off ceiling cornices and dado of every room till the brickwork-shell alone remained. Then they carted off to Berlin everything valuable they could lay their hands on, deliberately defacing and fouling what they could not remove. On the tenth day, General Mackensen himself came to see how his orders had been carried out!

"He told us how in Rumanian official circles it had been known at least three years before war broke

out that Germany intended it. Austria knew it too, and was in a great measure responsible for it. Count Pallavicini, Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople, came to Bucharest in April, 1913, to ask what Rumania would do in such a case. 'We must have a preventive war against Serbia,' he said. He repeated this remark many times in the course of that one conversation, using always the same expression 'preventive.' 'We must know,' he said, 'whether in such a case Rumania would be with us, because if not, we should accept the offer Bulgaria has *already* made to join us.' On 14th July, 1914, King Charles of Rumania told our friend that the ex-Kaiser had warned him that war was to take place, but probably not before three years. No doubt the Serajevo incident hurried the *dénouement*. A very prominent politician, an old Minister then out of office, was particularly anti-Entente, and was so furious when it was decided to enter the war on our side that he banged his fist on the Council-table, round which sat eighteen Ministers, presided over by the King in person, crying, 'Then may the Rumanian Army be not only beaten but utterly destroyed!'

"He was very amusing in his appreciations of present-day leading statesmen, all of whom he knows personally. Arthur Balfour he qualified as 'too much of a gentleman.' He apparently got both Clemenceau and Lloyd George to express their opinion one of the other. Clemenceau said of Lloyd George: 'He is good at making promises which he never keeps.' Lloyd George said of Clemenceau: 'I like him very well *for two or three days!*'

"He gave a shocking account of Rumania's

sufferings. When the so-called Peace had been signed, a friend of his, who was present as technical adviser, said to one of the Germans, a certain Dr. Kriege, acting in the same capacity: 'Now that all is over, don't you think your terms are rather harsh?' 'Harsh!' exclaimed the other. 'Why, your country has received from us *most-favoured-nation* treatment! You should see the terms we have prepared for England and France when *they* are beaten; those *are harsh if you like*!'"

CHAPTER XII

PERSIA

To Persia—Strange tales of Shah Nasr-ed-Din—The boy who did not want to be king—His coronation—Pictures of Teheran—An exciting and perilous journey to London and back.

PERSIA was the scene of our next diplomatic experiences, when in 1912, my husband was appointed to the Court of Shah Sultan Ahmed in succession to the late Sir George Barclay.

I was delighted with the appointment, for stories of Persia and of the legendary Shah Nasr-ed-Din, whose visits to England in 1873 and 1889 caused a sensation that has never yet been effaced, had amused me in my childhood. Many were the tales told of him, some of them true, some of them doubtless greatly exaggerated. Apparently, he never could accustom himself to the ways of our Western world, but considered that everything, fair ladies included, should be within the capacity of his limitless fortune to buy. Thus when his eyes fell with favour on the stately and beautiful Lady C., he was deeply affronted at the refusal of his request that she might be bought for his harem.

It is stated that once at the Alhambra he was so delighted with the *corps de ballet* that he whispered to his Grand Vizier to go at once behind the scenes

and "buy the girls in the front row." Failing to effect this purchase, he insisted, on his return home, that all the ladies of his harem, numbering over 300, should be dressed in the short skirts of the ballet dancer, and this custom still prevailed when my husband was in Persia for the first time in the year 1892.

Nasr-ed-Din's somewhat fierce bearing and the splendour of his magnificent jewels appealed to the popular fancy in England as being typical of the Oriental potentate known to them through the pages of *Hajji Baba* and *The Arabian Nights*. He became a popular hero and the subject of a tuneful rhyme which at that time was on the lips of every office boy, the refrain of which was, "Have you seen the Shah smoking a cigar?"

His entire absence of constraint *vis-à-vis* the outside world was illustrated at an audience of the *corps diplomatique* in Teheran, at which my husband was present in the early 'nineties. An English lady of a certain age was presented to Nasr-ed-Din, and it was mentioned to him that she was going to be married. Looking attentively at the lady, he remarked in his crude French, "*C'est tard!*" On another important occasion a very stout lady was presented to him. All he had to say, again in French, was "*Beaucoup!*"

Mussulmans of the Shiah denomination, to which this Shah belonged, marry four legal wives. But their supernumerary wives are married for a term of years only. One of Nasr-ed-Din's wives he married "for ninety-nine-years!"

This poor man was afterwards assassinated in his own country as he left the shrine of Shah Abdul

Azim some six miles from Teheran, after performing his devotions there. He was accompanied at the time by his faithful Grand Vizier, the Atabeg-Azam (himself later murdered), whose presence of mind probably saved the situation from developing dangerously. For, seeing that his master was dead by his side, but hoping to avoid a demonstration hostile to the throne, he concealed the fact from the crowd by supporting him upright in the carriage till the gates of the palace court-yard had been closed behind it.

Nasr-ed-Din was succeeded by his son Muzaffer-ed-Din, who also came to England. What chiefly attracted him at the music-halls was not so much the "stars," as the, to him, delightful din of the orchestra's instruments being tuned. On one occasion he begged that the opening chorus might be delayed while the operation was repeated. He delighted in the discord.

Muzaffer-ed-Din travelled in great splendour when he came to Europe and distributed gifts wholesale. His generosity was so great and became so well known that wherever he went the beggars used to line up with hand extended, waiting for largess. His health was very bad, and he died of diabetes soon after returning to Persia.

His son, Mohammed Ali Mirza, by whom he was succeeded, is still alive, but deposed and exiled from his country because of his weak and extravagant administration.

I first saw the ex-Shah in 1906 at a French watering-place. He was accompanied wherever he went by a beautiful little boy, the present Shah Sultan Ahmed.

I remember the child quite well. He was then about ten years old, a dear little fellow, very shy, with a face of baby roundness, a delicate button of a nose, and fine dark eyes. He seemed to be the object of his father's unceasing care, as though he were the one human being that unhappy monarch loved.

When we came to Persia, one of my husband's Russian colleagues was Monsieur Sabline, upon whom had fallen the task, entrusted to him by the Nationalists, of announcing to the little Prince the deposition of his father and his own elevation to the throne. He has often told me of the child's pathetic answer, that he did not think his mother would allow it! He consented, however, to take Monsieur Sabline to her, and an affecting scene ensued. Both the mother and the deposed Shah broke down at the thought of parting with their favourite child, and offered his brother in his place. Monsieur Sabline replied that the selection had been made by the people, and that he had no voice in the matter.

The boy wept bitterly in sympathy with his parents and declined to leave his mother. "Go away," he said, "I do not want to be a king." But finally Their Majesties were persuaded to agree. On Mohammed Ali Mirza's assent to his abdication and banishment being obtained, the necessary proclamation was immediately promulgated, and it was arranged that the Regent and a Nationalist deputation should receive the little Shah.

An interested crowd witnessed his departure from the custody of his natural guardians. During the whole morning the poor little fellow continued to weep bitterly at the prospect before him, and it

required a stern reprimand to make him dry his eyes. At last he pulled himself together bravely, stepped into the royal carriage, and, escorted by a mounted guard, drove off to Sultanatabad, where he was met by a deputation and solemnly notified of his accession to the throne of Persia.

He was told of the hope entertained by the nation that he would prove himself a good ruler. "Inshallah, I will!" he replied. Arrangements were then made for his new household, and meanwhile he remained with his tutors at Sultanatabad, where his mother was given free access to him.

I had my first audience of the young Shah soon after I arrived in Teheran. He has so lately paid a State visit to England that it is hardly necessary to give a personal description of him beyond the inevitable reference to his great corpulence. Unfortunately, this is a mark of ill-health which the European doctors in attendance have endeavoured in vain to counteract by prescribed exercise in the way of lawn tennis and riding. At the former game he does not excel, but on horseback he seems to the manner born. He and his horse have that something in common which distinguishes the Arab and every other denizen of a desert country whose only means of locomotion has ever been the good steed under him.

The Shah was only fifteen when I was presented to him, but looked more, possibly on account of his elderly style of dress. He wore a black European frock coat, and wide pale-grey trousers, waistcoat of loud-patterned white silk, and tie of heavy black satin. His attire was peculiarly ill-fitted to his childish face and enormous bulk. The only jewels he wore were a very fine diamond on the little finger of his

right hand, and a beautiful emerald hanging from his watch-chain. His manners at that time were marked by the shy gaucherie peculiar to his age, but when he came to London I was struck by the advance he had made in this respect. He then had the self-assurance of a ruling monarch among his peers.

When I was ushered into his presence by the son of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I found myself in an immense hall, all one side of which, right up to the ceiling, was a window, looking out on a most lovely pastel-coloured prospect of hill and dale with Teheran lying like a jewel enshrined in a distant mist. (Distance lends enchantment!) The palace in which we were was the summer palace, known as the Sultanatabad, a fairy structure built on the edge of a lake on a mountain spur about 5,000 feet above sea level. The walls of this Hall of Audience were lined with mirrors cut into facets and fixed in place with large gold-headed nails.

But there ended the Oriental touch in the Shah's surroundings. The hall had a European parquet floor, on which stood ormolu marble-inlaid tables; great glass chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and in the big window recess a number of modern French Louis XVI arm-chairs were placed in a half-circle on a beautiful Persian carpet.

The Shah's arm-chair differed in no respect from the others, but in front of it was a little bric-à-brac table on which lay two English illustrated papers.

When I came in the young Shah was standing behind this little table, with the Minister of the Court on his right and the Master of Ceremonies on his left. He shook hands with me very awkwardly,

being obviously nervous of strangers, and made me a sign to take the arm-chair beside him. Moin el Vizerek, my interpreter, stood between and a little behind us.

The Shah's voice was very staccato. He opened the conversation as usual by inquiring after my health, and having reassured him on this point, I inquired after his. He said he was well, and requested to know how His Excellency (Sir Walter) was. I said, "Well," and hoped His Majesty's brother was also enjoying good health. Having set my mind at rest on this point, he gasped a little and began to flounder in the conversational mire. Suddenly he recovered and inquired after the health of all my relatives in England.

I saw that the situation was getting desperate. I realized that I was on the point of "checkmating" the youthful Sovereign of Persia, for if I answered this with the obvious and only remark, "Very well, I thank Your Majesty!" he would be quite unable to think of a fresh topic. He threw an appealing glance at Moin el Vizerek, who hummed and hawed and coughed a little, and then said that His Majesty wished to thank me for the evident interest which Sir Walter took in the welfare of Persia.

The moment was one of great danger, for if in return for this complimentary phrase I merely bowed my acknowledgment, it would be a case of stalemate rather than checkmate, for neither the Shah nor Moin nor I could think of a single other thing to say!

All of a sudden I had a luminous inspiration. My eyes fell on the illustrated paper lying open on the

table in front of the Shah. Casting all ceremony aside, for desperate straits demand desperate measures, I edged my chair a little closer to the Shah's and, turning over the leaves, remarked that I was pleased to see that His Majesty took an interest in our English Press. As good luck would have it, this particular number contained a portrait of the young Prince of Wales. The situation was saved! Here was a mine of conversational wealth!

I began to tell him as fast as Moin could translate all about the Prince and his brothers, and their youthful pursuits in England. From that we passed on to other personalities, and by degrees our talk drifted to such varied topics as the height of English people, and the Suffragette question, which was then monopolizing public attention at home.

The Shah asked me if it was possible that women could be so badly behaved as to chain themselves to the railings outside the Prime Minister's house. Becoming absorbed in this topic, on which he seemed very well posted, he got quite animated, jerking out his questions with that quick, curiously characteristic upward movement of the head towards the interpreter standing over him. The minutes flew by, and when finally His Majesty rose to signify the audience was at an end, he told Moin to say that he hoped I would come and see him again, as it was the only foreign audience he had ever enjoyed!

Poor boy! It seemed almost cruel to hedge him round with the rigid etiquette of an Oriental Court. All young things want space and freedom to expand mentally and physically, be they prince or peasant. The Shah ought to have been riding and hunting instead of being cooped up in a palace and forced to

BRITISH LEGATION, TEHERAN

DAMASCUS

give audiences. But kingship has its compensations, no doubt, even for a boy!

The Shah was crowned in the summer of 1914. The ceremonial functions began at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, July 21, in the Mejliss (Parliament) House, when the boy Sovereign swore on the Koran to be faithful to the Constitution. As the elections for a new Mejliss were not completed, the members of a former Parliament, who had been dismissed by a *coup d'état* rather suddenly more than two and a half years before, were summoned in order to comply with the exigencies of the Constitution.

The ceremony was a record for dispatch and celerity. I was not present, as only men were admitted, but I heard all the details of what passed from Walter. The foreign Representatives who took part in it assembled at 9.30 and took their places in the Parliament Hall in a box facing the throne. At 10.15 the young Shah entered, looked round rather shyly, came forward, bowed awkwardly without looking at anyone in particular, and then proceeded to read the oath in a low voice that was barely audible.

By 10.18 the ceremony was over, and the company who had assembled to witness it dispersed. The Shah headed a great procession back to the palace from the Mejliss, which was interesting in spite of being somewhat tawdry, judged by our standard.

At 3.30 on the same day, the coronation took place in the great hall which contains the famous Peacock Throne, a square stage richly jewelled and enamelled. All the foreign Representatives, in full uniform, lined up on the right of it. The other onlookers were assembled in two rows three or four deep down both

sides of the long room, leaving a wide passage between them for the approach of the Sovereign.

He came in, preceded by the Cabinet Ministers, who took up their places opposite to the foreign representatives and to the left of the throne. The Shah was attended by the Regent and by his brother, the Valiahd, or Heir Apparent. He mounted the steps of the throne and sat down on a gilded chair placed upon it. The Regent took up his place on the right hand of him and the Valiahd stood by his brother.

A slight pause here gave one time to notice how the Shah was dressed for this ancient ceremony. He wore the frock-coat, the Persian "full-dress," with wide black trousers. Across his shoulders was the green ribbon of the Order of the Lion and the Sun. Round his waist was a belt from which hung a richly jewelled sword with scabbard set with diamonds. His black kola had affixed to the front of it the magnificent diamond aigrette, the most prized jewel of the Persian regalia, which attracted so much attention in England when worn by Nasr-ed-Din.

The crown was in position on a cushion in front of the Shah. Round it, sitting on their heels, squatted thirty or forty *mullahs* (priests).

As soon as the Shah was seated they intoned a sort of prayer, a melancholy drone, to which those who understood it made response from time to time with cries of "Allah! Allah!"

While this prayer was being chanted, the Shah rose and, taking the crown, placed it himself on his head, where he balanced it with some difficulty, as it was very large and clearly very heavy. The whole ceremony did not last more than ten minutes. When

it was over, the Shah took the crown off his head and replaced it on the cushion. His Majesty then put back his jewelled kola on his head and, descending from the throne, left the great hall without saluting either the *corps diplomatique* or his own Ministers. Not a sound was heard as he passed out. I could not help thinking of the ringing cheers which followed our own gracious Sovereigns on their progress down Westminster Abbey after a like ceremony!

A short interval elapsed, after which all present were received in ceremonious audience by the new Shah. Each of the foreign Representatives made him in turn a congratulatory address on behalf of the Sovereign or President he represented, after which, formal leave having been taken of the resigning Regent, everyone left the Palace. A new Shah had entered upon his reign!

That evening a great banquet was held at which the Shah presided. It was interesting as being the first occasion on which a Persian Sovereign had sat down to table with foreigners in his own country. The Valiahd took me in. I found him most intelligent and easy to talk to.

The very next day the German and the Belgian Ministers, who were going on leave to Europe, started together in one of the traditional old landaus in which all travellers (except me!) performed the journey from Teheran to Resht. To lighten the tedium of the long drive they had elected to share a carriage, little dreaming that before they reached their journey's end they would become professed enemies as a consequence of the Great War, which by then had burst upon the world. I have often wondered how they finished that long drive after the news reached them!

The Persian capital is a disappointing place from the tourist's point of view. It is wanting in colour, though nearly always bathed in glorious sunshine. The houses are built of baked mud, an unpicturesque medium, and the streets are very dusty. The Persian population is also uninteresting to the casual observer.

Men of the upper classes wear black frock-coats, but the fez in their case (which they call *kola*) is black instead of red as with the Turk. No ladies, of course, are seen abroad, as they may not walk in the streets, but through the windows of their closed carriages one gets glimpses of figures shrouded in black, their faces being veiled as with all Mohammedan women. The working population in the streets, men and women, all seem to wear different shades of the everlasting blue cotton, but there is very little about them which is really picturesque.

The beggars (and their rags are often picturesque if a little scanty!) who sit and beg in the roadway, or sometimes take up their permanent abode at one's gates, are an interesting feature of the Teheran streets. We had an old fellow who adopted us in this way. For months he lived in our garden on the house scraps which he begged for daily at the back door. He brought his mattress and his water-bottle and his beggar's bowl, and there he would lie or squat, day in day out, until at last a total eclipse of the sun so threw him off his balance that, taking it as a personal matter, after prostrating himself with tears and rending his already torn garments, he fled before the offended deity resident in the planet who thus veiled his countenance in anger.

The Shah of Persia is the direct descendant of Fath-Ali Shah, and consequently a member of the famous

tribe of Kajar, whose origin was Turkish. The Kajars are a very numerous tribe. There are nearly 3,000 of them in different grades of society, and all are for ever noble, though some occupy very menial positions nowadays. One of our Legation servants was a Kajar, and he was always addressed as Kadji Khan, though he went out on the box of the carriage!

Curiously enough, the chief of the tribe is not the Shah. The Head Kajar is called Il-Khani. But so much importance is attached to the tribe that when it comes to the question of the succession to the Throne, the son of a Kajar Princess is selected, even though he may not be the elder son.

In 1913 I deserted my family and friends in the Persian capital to go back for a few weeks to the delights of a London season. I had undertaken to deliver certain dispatches from my husband to the Foreign Office, and determined to acquit myself of my mission in the shortest possible time. I did the journey from door to door in eight days and eight nights. It was at that time, and may still be, a world record.

It was a lively and exciting journey. We had at that time a first-rate chauffeur named Bell and a light four-seater touring car which was almost the first seen in Teheran. The first stage of the journey home from the Persian capital to Enzeli, on the Caspian Sea, had hitherto been performed by carriage, a terribly tedious journey involving three sleepless nights on the road as one jogged slowly along, stopping at rest-houses for only time enough to give the wretched nags a breather. If one liked, one could spend the night in these ill-named rest-houses, but most people preferred to push on after hastily consuming a cup

of tea. This is where I had the chief advantage in point of speed, for I covered the distance by motor between 8.30 one morning and 2 p.m. of the following day, when I reached Enzeli just in time to board the steamer, which in two days and a night takes one to Baku on the Russian side of the Caspian. It was a breathless race Bell and I had to catch that boat.

Our first adventure happened before even we got to Kazvin, when we came to what in summertime would be a wide and dry river-bed, but under the then prevailing wet and windy weather conditions (it was in early April) had become a sea of yellow mud, broken into a thousand different water channels and tiny little eddies. Bell looked at it and shook his head. He couldn't cross over a bridge, there was none; he couldn't follow a course in the river-bed, there was none to follow; only slimy mud flats with huge boulders in between. He could only trust to luck. He plunged boldly in and had got half-way across, his arms being nearly wrenched from their sockets in the effort, when all of a sudden came that awful whirr of the engine which proclaims that it has gone on strike because the wheels won't bite. We looked round for help in a country-side which up to that moment I had thought deserted. But as always happens when there is a hint of an accident anywhere between London and Timbuctoo, a crowd sprung from nowhere, instantly gathered on the river-bank, and rolling up its blue cotton trousers, dashed to our assistance. They stumbled, yelling and excited, across the slimy marsh, they surrounded the stranded car and bodily extricated us from our unpleasant position, hoisting us to safety on the opposite bank.

The next incident occurred on the top of a mountain pass, where we found a big German six-cylinder car drawn up across the middle of the narrow *corniche* road. In it, or rather beside it, were a party of corpulent sons of the Fatherland, evidently also going to Resht, but they had called a halt in order to obtain a photographic souvenir of their party, and they stood there attitudinizing, beer glass and sandwich in hand, oblivious of our wish to pass. Almost rude they were, ignoring our polite hoot until the camera had clicked and one of them was at liberty to board the big car and make room for us to go by. After leaving them, we continued to climb the mountain range which divided us from Resht. The road was narrow and the road-bed bad, with a wall of rock on one side and a bottomless abyss on the other, none too pleasant a drive under any circumstances, but the Germans made it worse for us. A short time after we had passed them, at a very nasty downhill curve, they caught us up again, hooting for all they were worth and with their exhaust open, so that they filled the countryside with noise. They passed us, as I insisted on Bell making way for them, and the soldier servants with them jeered rudely at us. But still later on that same evening we had our revenge, a glorious revenge, for we caught them up again shivering at the edge of a muddy landslide caused by a freshet running down the mountain-side and falling into the valley, right across the road we had perforce to follow. It was a nasty place to negotiate, as, being 50 feet wide at least, one could not guess at its depth in the centre. The Germans were now punished for their discourtesy, for being in front of us it was obviously up to them to go across first, if

they could! We pulled up and waited for them. They tried to go full steam ahead, but their front wheels became embedded in the mud and they had to reverse and barely got out. Sarcastically they waved to us to try our luck next. "We must do it, Bell," I whispered, "or die in the attempt." "You bet," he answered, putting conventional etiquette aside for a moment, "we're not going to funk it before them Germans." We had a longer take-off than the Boches and a much lighter car. Setting his teeth, Bell went at it and just managed to clear it. We were pleased. I could not resist throwing a rope to the Germans over the back of the car with the old familiar gesture as we sped away on round the next corner. But I have not yet mentioned the curious coincidence that at this generally deserted spot we had found yet another car stuck on the edge of the freshet. It was a closed one, and belonged, as I afterwards heard, to the Russian Engineering Company who had charge of the road. In it was a lady, whom I caught sight of as we passed, leaning pathetically out of the window, in tears at her sad plight. We were told later on that horses and ropes had to be sent back to them to pull them all through. All this made us very late for our sleeping-place, Neugil, and it was getting dark. So we determined to pull up for the night at the next *chapar khanek* (Persian rest-house) we should pass. This proved to be a horrid little place. But we supped off the provisions in my basket, and Bell unfolded my camp bed. For himself, he placed a mattress on the floor in the passage across the door of my room, for I didn't like the place a bit. By 5 a.m. the next morning we had the luggage on board and were ready to start,

THE REIGNING SHAH OF PERSIA

when, lo! and behold, it was found to be impossible to start up the engine. A careful inspection revealed a crack in the chassis, the result, doubtless, of some severe shock on the day before. Then I thought all was up, and I could see that Bell did too, for we had even then barely time to complete our journey to Resht by 2 p.m. that afternoon. But off came the luggage, and in two minutes he was at work with his tools. In an incredibly short time he had riveted an iron plate over the crack and the car was ready again for the road. We started and thought all was right, but five minutes later at a part of the road so narrow that there was barely room for us all, a long fleet of camels came into view, laden with coal slung in baskets. We took the safe side and waited for them, squeezing the motor against the wall of rock on our left, and the soft-footed animals plodded past us at the very edge of the precipice. But in doing so, the last one caught our wing with his basket and tore it completely off. I was thankful the steering gear was not hurt. We patched up that injury and again we started, but hadn't been going long when Bell declared something new to be wrong. The bonnet was hot. He got down and discovered just in time a bad leak in the water-jacket. The water had escaped. He patched up the hole and it took us half an hour at the next *chapar khanek* pouring water into the tank with a teacup, no other vessel being handy. Then we started again, but ill luck dogged our tracks! The luggage carrier broke and all the luggage had to be shifted, the heavy things coming inside with me, so that I looked like the caged canary in the family removal, the others being lashed on all round. What else? Oh, yes, Bell had his thumb

sprained by a bad jerk of the steering wheel and just before we came into Resht we found a stretch of flat road, half a mile long, completely under water. Bell declared, after taking soundings, that he thought he would be able to get through if he had the luck to keep out of a bad rut. This time Fortune favoured us, and we emerged without getting the water over our footboard. As we raced through Resht to Engali with still twenty minutes to spare, I could see the funnels of our ship in the port. But even when we got there our troubles were not over. For before going on board we had to "garage" the car for the time of our absence in England in a shed, which, to our horror, we found had a high wooden step barring the entrance. Like lightning I flew round looking for two short planks, which luckily I found. These I laid against, and half-way up, the step at the distance apart of the two front wheels. I stood before the car and with my hands directed Bell, as with beautiful precision he ran the wheels gently up the plank, which then tipped over on the inside of the doorway so that the wheels descended on them and the car was got safely inside. In a moment Bell was out of his seat and had seized upon the luggage (luckily one does not have much when *leaving* Persia), I locked the door of the shed and we dashed on board ship just in the nick of time.

We had a lovely smooth crossing of the Caspian after all our troubles on the road. The beautiful distressed damsel in the Embourbé motor turned up again on board and turned out to be an ugly yellow-haired Russian dancer, dressed in a skin-tight white cloth dress with pale green stockings, silver kid shoes with high heels, and *peau de suède* gloves to the elbow.

Over all a pink silk Persian *abbas* (cloak). A good yachting costume!

The rest of my journey was via Baku (redolent of oil), Rostoff, Moscow in its pre-war beauty, Kalisch, the frontier town where so much fighting took place in the Great War, Berlin and Flushing to London, where I delivered my dispatches at the Foreign Office in exactly eight days and eight nights from the time of leaving Teheran, on the strength of which I claim a world's record.

After six weeks' leave in London, I had to return to my family in Teheran, and Lady Kennard came with me as she also was rejoining her husband about that time. Bell, of course, came with us, as we were to motor again from the Caspian to Teheran. I took out a set of new tyres and tubes for the old car, and before long we needed them, for we had no less than nineteen punctures in the first six hours after leaving the coast! Bell repaired them all with wonderful skill and patience, but as he fixed the last patch on the last tube he remarked pathetically: "If this one goes, we're done." It *did* go, even before we had started. For the pump handle broke in pumping up the tyre, and so we were unable to inflate it. There was nothing to be done but wait by the roadside *en plein désert* till, in the course of time, the carriage which was bringing the mails in the time-honoured fashion should catch us up! This could not be till the following day, as we had a six hours' motor-car start of it. So we took the cushions out of the car and our provisions, such as they were, and cooked some eggs in an Etna and ate a few bananas. And we waited, hour after hour, through that evening, through that night, and the whole of the next inter-

minable day, till midnight of the following night, when we were aroused from fitful sleep by the sound of distant tinkling carriage bells. Slowly the sound approached, until finally, in the bright moonlight, we descried the old victoria with its pair of ragged horses. How grateful we were to exchange them for the discarded motor-car, of which we had been so proud! Bell, of course, had to remain behind with it till we could send assistance, but he was a really good sportsman and never uttered a grumble as he tucked us in and bade us God-speed. We started, and so tired were we of doing nothing in the blazing desert sun that we soon fell fast asleep, lulled by the monotonous jog-trot of the horses under the desert moon. But suddenly—crash! I was awakened, seeing stars indeed. I rolled over and sat up on the sand. What had happened? I looked round and saw Lady Kennard rolling in the sand also a few yards away, and between us the fragments of a broken carriage and two horses struggling on their sides. The driver came up to see if we were hurt. The axle of the carriage had broken from some jolt more violent than usual and the wheels had fallen apart! Again we had no prospect but to wait! This time our hopes were centred on the luggage cart, which, starting when we did, would creep forward by infinitely slow stages till it caught up the carriage. And, indeed, it did turn up next day when the sun was already high in the heavens and the heat of its vertical rays had become almost unbearable, for we had no shelter where we sat. The luggage was dragged out of it and we crept into it, feeling more miserable than words can say. Slowly, oh! so miserably slowly, we started again. Never shall I forget that

THE AUTHOR'S LITTLE SON, STEVE
In the Native Dress given him at Teheran in 1915 by the Baktiari Chief

journey in the creaking cart, the heat of the sun, the fare of the so-called rest-houses, the fatigue in our bones—the whole of that long journey from England. I can laugh over it now, though at the time I was in no mood to do so. We arrived in Teheran more dead than alive! Such are the infinite varieties of Persian travelling.

The British Legation in Teheran is an impressive building. A white-stuccoed, green-shuttered house with French windows opening on to a 55-yard-long verandah, leading down by a flight of broad steps to a garden full of roses and nightingales, shaded by avenues of tall ombues (a great tree indigenous to Persia and India). As the water in Teheran is all brought from the mountains by a system of underground *kanets* (pipes), the gardens are intersected by prepared channels for its reception, which are opened at frequent intervals by a water coolie, whose duty it is to see that these rivulets run *freely*, unobstructed over their bed of turquoise blue tiles. Round the Legation compound (as they call the many-acred enclosure, which is surrounded by walls and entered through imposing gateways), dotted about in their own bright little gardens, are the houses of the Secretaries and Consular Staff. Our Legation is about the only big open space in Teheran where the trees have been allowed to stand and the grass lawns have been watered and tended by succeeding generations of Ministers, whose chief relaxation is the careful superintendence of this oasis in the desert.

CHAPTER XIII

Belgium

My work for the Censorship in London—We go to The Hague—British prisoners of war—A visit to Zeebrugge—I follow up the retiring Germans—Bruges—The underground club of the U-boat officers—An eye-witness of how Captain Fryatt went to his death—The devastation of War—The tragic glory of Ypres, and how the King of the Belgians re-entered the martyred town.

AFTER leaving Persia, Walter remained some months *en disponibilité* in London, during which time he did voluntary war work at the Foreign Trade Department, where he was associated with Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, now Minister for War.

I filled up the same interval at the Censorship in Salisbury House, Moorgate Street, where I worked very hard. Little did I deserve the gibe of the cheeky school-urchin who, being allowed to take a short cut with his schoolfellows from Moorgate Street to Finsbury Pavement through the broad-paved corridors of Salisbury House, passed the door of my office, on which was inscribed "Lady Susan Townley," and mischievously changed the letter "d" into a "z," thus stigmatizing my conduct in a wholly unmerited manner!

The head of our Department was Major Du Cros, who, poor man, was afterwards drowned on a sea

voyage which he took on some official business, the ship in which he travelled being torpedoed.

He was very severe, in fact, so was the War Office, on anything savouring of indiscretion in our Department. One morning when I arrived, he sent for me to say that one of the young ladies working under me was to appear that day before the military authorities and would probably be dismissed for indiscretion.

The story of what she had done had reached their ears in the following indirect way, which shows how very much alive they were to everything that was going on.

Miss A. lunched one day at Miss B.'s flat in Victoria Mansions, and two other girl friends were present. The conversation turned upon young Captain C., who had been engaged before the war to a friend of theirs.

"Oh, that's all over," said one of the girls, "they have broken it off."

"Not at all," chipped in the girl in my office. "A letter passed through my hands to-day which proves that it is very much on."

That evening Miss B. sat in her flat and wrote to a friend in Canada. Again the subject of Captain C.'s matrimonial affairs cropped up. She told of the luncheon that day, and of how she had heard from a girl in the "Censorship" that young C.'s affair was going on all right.

Her letter was censored at Liverpool. From there a telegram was sent back to the War Office: "Look out for *a girl in the Censorship* who lunched last Tuesday at a flat in Victoria Mansions, and who has been talking!"

A detective called on Miss B. and asked her for the name of this "girl" in the "Censorship." At first she refused to give it, but when she was quietly told that her refusal meant a heavy fine and possibly imprisonment, she yielded, with the result that her friend got dismissed.

Indeed, they were terribly strict on this point. Another day Major Du Cros sent for me to say that one of our Censors had been overheard *talking* at a restaurant in the city. Would I find out which one it was? I asked if he could give me any hint to guide me. He said all he knew was that she had a pink feather in her hat. So that evening when the time came to stop work, I took up my post at the door of the building, and of course spotted the feather as it went out. Luckily for me, there was only one pink feather that day, or I might have found myself in a quandary.

But my time in the Censorship only lasted a few months, for in January, 1917, Walter was appointed Minister at The Hague in succession to Sir Alan Johnstone. The announcement of his selection to fill that difficult post was informally conveyed to him at Charing Cross Station by the Prime Minister, who in the interval of his bustling preparations for departure on one of his Continental missions told him that he looked upon Holland as the locked door between England and Germany and that he wanted some one reliable at the keyhole of that door.

So we started on February 2, crossing the North Sea in the *Copenhagen* on the first day of the intensified U-boat campaign. We were very lucky in so far as the sea was absolutely calm, but the cold was so great that as we neared the Dutch coast we navigated

Albert

through a sea of floating ice washed out by the tide from the frozen mouth of the river.

We were escorted by fourteen "destroyers" of the newest and fastest type. I suppose it was felt that the capture on the High Seas of the newly appointed British Minister to Holland would offer too great an advertisement to Admiral Tirpitz to permit of any risk being taken in this connexion.

We arrived safely at the Hook, where we were met by motors from The Hague in which we travelled to the Legation.

Our new official home when I first saw it, though possibly attractive in peace time, reminded me of nothing so much as of a terminus hotel. It was terribly overcrowded, as it had been deemed wise to collect under one roof all the British interests in the town. It was a good arrangement, at least so far as Walter was concerned, as it enabled him to do all his work on the spot. The beautiful ball-room and even one of the drawing-rooms on the ground floor had been partitioned off and converted into offices for the four working departments, Diplomatic, Naval, Military and Commercial. No less than fifty people, including clerks and typists, worked day in day out in that house, the click of the typewriter forming an unceasing accompaniment to the buzz of conversation and the shout of the telephone.

Each Department had its own visitors, whose coming and going continued uninterruptedly. In the front hall, which I frequently had to cross, sat odd-looking men waiting in odd corners, strewing the tables and chairs with odd-looking coats and hats. Every type of man seemed to gravitate to the Legation on some business or other, from the pros-

perous Dutch merchant growing fat on the war to the British commercial agent and the German spy, to say nothing of Foreign diplomatists and British Flying and Naval Officers, whose ill-luck had brought them to grief at some time or another in Dutch territory and who were therefore "interned" for the duration of the war.

We found a pleasant *corps diplomatique* at The Hague, but to our horror we discovered that the German Minister and his wife were Dr. and Frau Rosen, who had been former colleagues of ours in Bucharest in the year 1911, not so very long before the war. I was disagreeably shocked to find them in The Hague, for it is astonishingly difficult to be rude and to "cut" a man in the street even when he is an "enemy," and more especially when he is accompanied by his wife, who is a countrywoman of your own!

I remember the first time we met the Rosens under these circumstances. It was in a narrow country lane on the way to Klingendaal, the country seat of Baroness Daisy de Brienen. We saw them coming from a long way off. They were walking, so were we. We had to meet; there was no way out! It was a very hot day and he wore his straw hat hanging from his waistcoat button. He had taken off his coat, which he carried on one arm (*a sans-gêne* in a foreign capital typical of a German), his wife hung on the other.

Agonizingly I implored Walter for instructions. Might I salute them? It was so difficult not to. We had known them so well in Bucharest: we had often dined in each other's houses! No! was his stern rejoinder. So we met and passed each other

in that narrow lane, both parties gazing sky high in the attempt to look unconcernedly over the heads of the others. I didn't like it a bit, in spite of the fact that they were "enemies."

Shortly after the outbreak of the Revolution, Rosen was named Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Republican Government of his country. Strange for one who was so favoured by the deposed Kaiser! His nature must partake, I suppose, of some of the attributes of the sunflower.

His career has been meteoric. He is evidently favoured by the god of luck or opportunities. He began life in quite a small way, and was at one time tutor to Lord Dufferin's boys, when the latter was Viceroy of India. No doubt he then had excellent opportunities of picking up crumbs of official information which fell from the Viceregal table, for which he would be rewarded by his Government. For as is now pretty generally known, all German patriots leaving the Fatherland to seek their fortunes in strange lands (whether as diplomatists, waiters or bagmen) were subsidized by the German Government to send home a periodical letter giving such information as they might be able to collect concerning the country they were in.

After he left the service of Lord Dufferin, Dr. Rosen was for many years interpreter at the German Legation at Teheran, where Frau Rosen nearly died of cholera. She is an Englishwoman, a distinguished pianist, the daughter of old Roche, in whose classes we most of us learnt our French.

After Persia, Dr. Rosen was found at Jerusalem, where he had the good fortune to be Consul at the time of the Kaiser's celebrated visit to the Holy

Land in 1899. We hear of him taking a very prominent part in Tangiers, where he was Minister and where his then British colleague was fully alive to his activities. From there, via Algeçiras, he reached Bucharest, which he had to leave, nominally on account of his insufficient means, but really, it was whispered, because Frau Rosen failed in her attentions to a lady very dear to Kiderlen-Waechter, Rosen's predecessor at Bucharest, who had left that post to become Minister of Foreign Affairs in Berlin.

I had forgotten all about the Rosens after we left Bucharest until while I was at the Censorship they were recalled to my mind by a curious incident. The profound knowledge of German which I had acquired under the ruthless discipline of a succession of Teutonic Fräuleins had resulted in my being appointed D.A.C. (Deputy Assistant Censor) in the German branch of that office. In the discharge of my duties I was going from one Department to another one day, when in the lift I was accosted by a little man, a stranger to myself. He introduced himself as Mr. Roche. "You will realize at once who I am," he said, "when I tell you that I am the brother of Mrs. Rosen, the wife of the German Minister at The Hague!"

I confess I was amazed at his introducing himself to me on those grounds, and still more at the fact that a fellow-worker in that particular office should be a brother-in-law of the German Minister at The Hague.

Soon after our arrival in Holland I went to Groningen, in the north-east corner of it, to visit there the huge camp of interned British soldiers. Nearly all of them belonged to the Royal Naval Division and became prisoners of the Dutch when, after the disas-

trous Antwerp fiasco, they crossed over into Holland to avoid being captured by the Germans.

I found them all herded together, behind barbed wire, in wooden barracks. They were trying hard to make the best of things. But the great danger to these men from the point of view of the few devoted officers who had obtained permission from the Dutch Government to share their imprisonment was their enforced idleness. They might not even be put through their ordinary peace-time drill, which would have been a help in maintaining some sort of discipline.

There was nothing from morning till evening that they were *obliged* to do! Think what that meant when such numbers were crowded together under conditions of almost unbearable discomfort, with all privacy eliminated. The officers tackled the situation in a manner that did them the highest credit. The men were encouraged to busy themselves in any way they would, from gardening to carving, toy-making, straw plaiting, acting, singing and learning languages.

We received no fewer than eight escaped British officers at the Legation in the first months that we were there. Most of them got away by jumping out of moving trains while they were being transferred from one camp to another. They had hairbreadth adventures. Some of them had the cheek to walk right across Germany and yet got safely over the Dutch frontier. Most of them walked all night and spent the day in hiding, sometimes creeping up drain pipes in the fields to avoid being scented by the blood-hounds. They looked like scarecrows when they arrived, having had nothing to eat for days, in most cases, but a little chocolate.

The economic conditions of Holland deteriorated as the war progressed. There was no coal. Even the richest people had to do with one fire in the house, and if they elected to have that one fire in the drawing-room or dining-room, the dinner had to be cooked there as well. Electric light was strictly rationed to save fuel. Bread was rationed—only 300 grammes per head per diem. Everything was of exorbitant price. Tea, coffee, whisky, and nearly all groceries were unobtainable; so was meat.

In May, 1917, I undertook at Walter's request some work called for by the Department of Information then under Colonel Buchan. Daily and immediate news was required of what was happening in Germany as reported in the German Press. The already overworked diplomatic Chancery could not be asked to do more, so Walter proposed that I should undertake the work. This was agreed to, so from that day my name figured in the F.O. list, and I was immensely proud. Henceforth I spent my days reading the German papers and telegraphing home a digest of their contents, news which otherwise would reach home at very uncertain intervals or not at all, owing to the difficulty of forwarding mails across the North Sea on account of the U-boat activity.

It was most interesting work, though very tiring, as I had to read at least a dozen papers daily to get a fair idea from all shades of the Press as to how things were going. When it came to translating Resolutions in the Reichstag, the Minutes of important Committee meetings and Press comments on suggested Peace terms, it was no joke, as one dared not make a mistake for fear of presenting a misleading view of the question.

On May 23, after I had sent out over a hundred wires, I received a letter from the F.O. saying that my telegrams summarizing the current of thought in the German Press were admirable and so useful that they deserved further publicity. As Lord Hardinge saw no objection, they would be communicated to the Press and put out through the Press Bureau.

Encouraged by the feeling that my work was really of use, I stuck to it till the Armistice. I sent home over 1,000 telegrams.

As time went on, and after the British prisoners of war arrived at The Hague (at the end of December, 1917) to be interned there for the duration of hostilities, our activities, other than diplomatic, increased amazingly. The Red Cross kept us hard at work. I opened seven branches of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild in different parts of Holland, in all of which the ladies of the British Colony and many of our Dutch friends worked untiringly to make hospital appliances and the necessary comforts for the repatriated sick and totally incapacitated British soldiers who passed through Holland on their way to England. I was allowed to go to the Frontier to welcome them, and boarded the long German ambulance train at Rosendaal, travelling back in it to Rotterdam. The train of twenty-seven coaches was entirely made up of cots filled with mutilated, blind, armless, legless, insane and dying soldiers. One imagined one would never find courage to travel up and down those carriages from one bed to another, greeting their poor occupants. But the atmosphere created by them, far from being sad, was positively gay. I never saw such cheerfulness, such courage and resignation. The sound of an English voice

seemed to bring "Blighty" nearer to them, and they were so anxious to get there, poor lads!

The Y.M.C.A. also established many centres in The Hague, and called for volunteer assistance. We opened one Club in the basement of the British Legation where scores of N.C.O. prisoners of war came to spend their leisure. Being very large, like everything else about the house, the transformed basement was able to accommodate one hundred and fifty men at a time. They had their kitchen, tea-room, reading-room and billiard-room.

Upstairs we opened a Club for Officers, devoting two of the large State rooms to this purpose. The need for this Club arose from the fact that the expenses of hotel life in The Hague were prohibitive, and as many of the fiancées and friends of the officers came to The Hague, it was urgent to find some quiet place where they could meet, have tea and read the home papers. It gave us a much-valued opportunity also of becoming acquainted with them all. Several of the officers were eventually married from the Legation. Their fiancées (camouflaged in most cases as "V.A.D.'s for the British Hospital," for they were only allowed to enter Holland in some sort of official capacity) stayed with us before the great event, and Walter gave them away at the wedding ceremony which took place in the English church. It was a great pleasure to be able to give them as English a wedding as could be contrived under war conditions. I have got a valued book of photographs of all these marriage groups, taken at the Legation after the wedding breakfasts, and before the bridal pairs started on their honeymoon.

In October, 1918, thanks to Walter's official position

at The Hague, and through the kind offices of General Onnen, I obtained from the Dutch Commander-in-Chief, General Snyders, a pass for myself and a friend which facilitated our entry into Belgium at a place called Sluis, not many miles from Zeebrugge, on the northern coast. I thus had the exceptionally good fortune to be able to visit our neighbours the Belgians before the Armistice was signed, and before the process began of removing the traces of German "occupation."

We travelled in our own closed motor-car, carrying as little luggage as we could, and spent our first night on Belgian soil at Knocke. I slept in a tiny room, the windows of which were all broken by recent explosions of munition dumps.

Before evacuating, the Germans had mined their coast batteries (among them the celebrated Kaiser Wilhelm battery) and thoughtfully timed the mines to explode after their departure. They had also deprived the town of light by severing all the electric wires, and of telegrams and telephone service by sawing through the poles.

On the door of my room was a notice still hanging, which announced in best Gothic caligraphy, "Offiziers Zimmer. Muss nicht mit Burschen belegt werden" (Officers' Room. Not to be occupied by orderlies). As there was nothing to eat, we went to bed supperless. I wrapped myself in my rug—there were no such things as blankets in that hotel—and after extinguishing the candle stuck in a toy lantern, by the light of which I undressed, I pillowed my head on my motor-coat and, like a tired campaigner, fell asleep, too exhausted even to dream of the late occupants of the room.

Next morning the "Commandant de la Place" paid us a visit and later himself accompanied us in our motor to Zeebrugge. Our feelings can better be imagined than described as we approached the scene of that most glorious episode in our naval history.

We drove through the town along a road parallel with the sea-front, and at a given point left the car and climbed from it to the top of the dunes, where those murderous 15-inch guns were posted which defended the entrance to the Bruges Canal.

Unused ammunition in the shape of great six-foot shells lay piled around them. I am glad to say that in many cases the fragmentary condition of these ammunition depots, blown to pieces by well-aimed shots, gave evidence of the wonderful marksmanship of the British monitors, which shelled them continuously from a distance of anything up to twenty-three land miles.

We stepped among the debris of those batteries looking about us curiously. In one of them I found the undress clasp of an Iron Cross evidently dropped there by an officer. I could not help wondering what must have been the feelings of the defenders of those batteries on the night of that unexpected attack. I had on a later occasion a long talk with the proprietor of the big hotel just beyond the Mole. The Germans kept him a close prisoner during all the time of their Occupation, though he was forced to run his hotel for their benefit, and he told me of the awful panic that prevailed, so greatly enhanced by the unexpectedness of the attack and by the fact that owing to the darkness and the terrific din the Germans could not precisely locate the enemy nor grasp the significance of his movements. They

could not even distinguish for certain between friend and foe!

As we entered Zeebrugge on that morning (October 23), only two days after the Germans had left it, one of their mines in the harbour exploded, sending up a huge black column of smoke. It seemed to bring them unpleasantly near one.

As we walked along the shore batteries our straining eyes were at last rewarded by the distant vision of the Mole, and presently we could distinguish the huge gap in it where four months before that gallant young officer, Lieutenant Richard Sandford, had destroyed the railway viaduct which connected the two ends of it by running his submarine L3 at a speed of 10 knots between the piers that supported it and there blowing her up. By this great feat he prevented all reinforcements from the shore from coming to the assistance of the defenders on the extreme end of the Mole. He himself fired the time-fuse, after the crew had abandoned the ship by his orders, and then jumped into the motor skiff with them.

Some time after this heroic episode I met Lieutenant Sandford's brother, who had also been present on that night in charge of a picket-boat detailed off for rescue work, and he told me how his brother, though severely wounded, had returned as cool as a cucumber from his great adventure. He died in his bed, a few months after, of typhoid fever, I think.

Our next visit, in Bruges, was to a villa close to the port belonging to a gentleman called Monsieur Catulle, N.P. For more than three years the German submarine commanders had their head-quarters in this

villa. At first the house was used as the permanent head-quarters of the submarine officers, who returned to it after their various excursions. But later, when the fear of British bombardments entered into their souls, they found these quarters too precarious, and they abandoned them as far as sleeping was concerned, although they converted the cellars into a kind of dug-out which they used as a club.

A small door and staircase led down into these cellars. On the wall, descending with the gradient of the stairs, was painted a processional *danse macabre*, each figure in which was a torpedo with human face, legs and arms. On the right arm of each was painted one letter of the device "Ja, die U-boot Flotillie ist da!"

From the ceiling of the biggest of the vaulted chambers hung a British ship's wheel, to which were suspended, in close juxtaposition, the ship's bells of all the Entente vessels seized by the U-boat commanders. When the supper revels were at their height, the din was added to by a turn given to this wheel, which set all the bells jangling at the same time.

The walls of the cellars had been gaily painted with a frieze, in which champagne bottles figured prominently, with vulgar scenes, such as German sailors discharging a champagne bottle in the shape of a torpedo at a certain part of John Bull's person, who, under the impact of the blow, was seen leaping into the air.

Under each picture was an inscription inspired by wine and women. The most vulgar of them adorned a small inner chamber, on the walls of which was painted a nude woman, labelled, "Aber hier wohnt Emma!"

Every night, apparently, the U-boat officers held their carnival in this underground club. Frequently, when called away to duty, they were so intoxicated that they had to be conducted to their vessels supported under either arm by sailors. Prince Adalbert was a frequent visitor and joined the officers in their revels.

Of the forty submarine officers the Catulle servants knew in this club, only four remained alive at the time of the evacuation; apparently thirty-six had met their end in the discharge of their death-dealing mission. The survivors, however, never allowed themselves to be depressed, and there was no check on their nocturnal orgies if one of their number failed to return.

"There is no need to clean up to-night," said one of the four survivors to the maid on the last day, as they were about to flee on the near approach of the Allies. "Tommy kommt Morgen" (Tommy is coming to-morrow) . . .

We went to have our papers put in order by the Military Commandant, de la Place de Bruges. He gave me a pass dated the 23. 10. 18., couched in the following words:—

"Lady Susan Townley, femme du Ministre d'Angleterre a la Haye, est autorisée à circuler librement a toutes heures du jour et de la nuit, par tous les moyens de transport. Valable jusqu'au 15 Novembre 1918." (The Armistice was signed on November 11.)

Armed with this document I no longer had any difficulty in going wheresoever my interest prompted me to explore.

My first visit was to the churchyard where Captain Fryatt was buried. I found his grave without difficulty, owing to the forethought of the Belgian sexton,

who, guessing the interest which would be attached to it by Englishmen after the war, had taken the precaution of marking the site by a tiny anchor of growing cactus plants, a touching tribute to the profession of the dead man.

It seemed so sad that no hand of an English friend had been allowed to place a token upon his last resting-place, that I went into the town and bought a large wreath of white "immortelles," and these I laid upon the grave.

Subsequently, I went to the convent of the Sisters of Providence, who in peace time have charge of the women's side of the prison of Bruges, because I was told that the Superior, Sœur Marie Antoine—who, with the other nuns, probably on account of their usefulness, had been left by the Germans undisturbed in the pursuit of their work of mercy—had details of the last hours of Captain Fryatt which she was anxious to communicate to me.

Half the convent had been seized by the Germans for the use of their prisoners of war, political as well as military, and Sœur Marie Antoine was forbidden access to them, although she could not be prevented from occasionally seeing them in that part of the court-yard which was necessarily used by both men and women approaching or leaving the prison. It came to pass thus that she got to know Fryatt quite well by sight and used to watch for his coming out to exercise with his jailer.

Sœur Marie Antoine, who throughout the German occupation was a real angel of mercy to such of our prisoners as she could get into touch with, tried to ingratiate herself with the warders in the hope of being able to approach Fryatt, or at least to be allowed

to send him such trifles as she could dispose of for his comfort. But she never succeeded in speaking to him, although she found out that the number of his cell was seventy-two in the wing reserved for prisoners condemned to death or to perpetual imprisonment.

I saw that cell! It was bare of furniture save for a folding bed, a rickety tripod washstand in which he had to wash up his cup and plate after meals, and a small tin slop-pail. The one window was high up, and through its dingy barred pane showed a foot or two of sky. In the door was a small trap, outside which on a ledge was placed the scanty food which formed the prison fare. Fryatt was locked in this prison for twenty-four hours at a stretch, being allowed at those intervals only to clean his cell.

It may give some idea of the indignities and sufferings imposed on Belgian men and women who were at times imprisoned here by order of Admiral Schroeder, to know that three men, or three women, as the case might be, were interned together in cells such as this, for terms of imprisonment sometimes lasting weeks, with no conveniences for the ordinary decencies of life beyond those described in Fryatt's cell, and no means of opening the window.

But to return to poor Captain Fryatt. There was a German warder in the prison whom I shall call Hans, not knowing his real name, who had been a long time in London before the war and had there assimilated a certain amount of British *Kultur*. This taught him to be humane in the treatment of a fallen foe, and he became quite confidential with Sœur Marie Antoine under the influence of a glass of wine she occasionally reserved for him, bringing her such news as he could collect of the Entente prisoners.

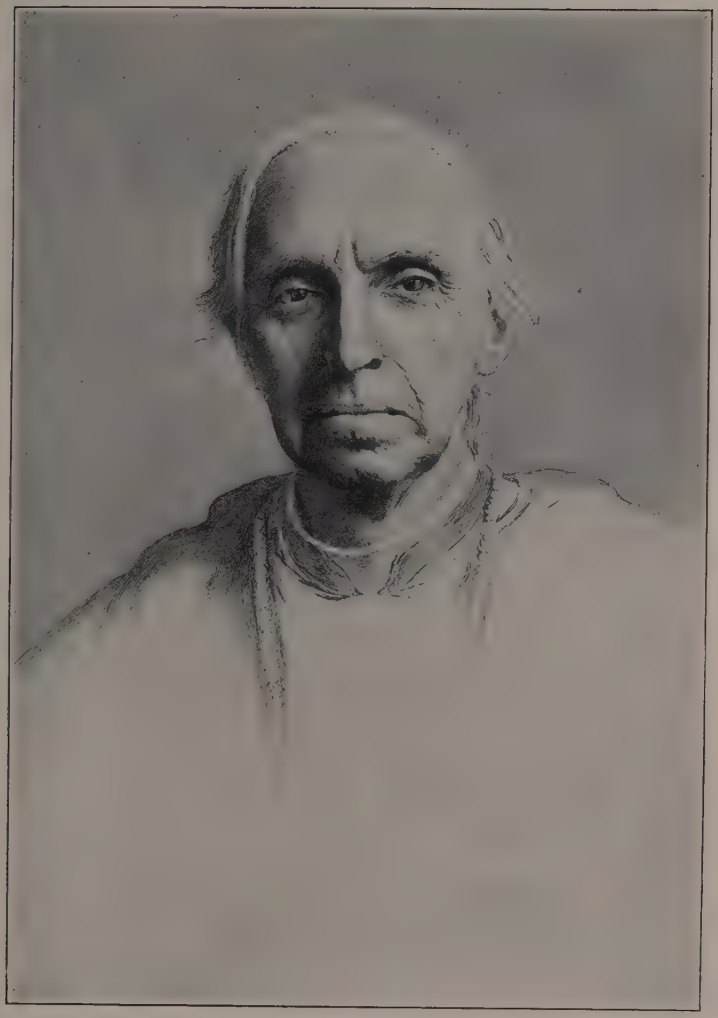
Among others he used to speak of Fryatt. One day he came to her in great excitement. "He is to be tried, *ma sœur*. To-day he will be taken before the military court martial," was his news. It proved correct, for later she saw Fryatt go forth to his trial and presently return. He was, as appears from what she subsequently heard, taken back to his cell without being told that the death sentence had been passed upon him. Half an hour later, two officers came to fetch him away for his execution.

Sœur Marie Antoine saw him pass through the prison court-yard to the entrance, where a motor-car waited for the party. For a moment Fryatt stopped, and, heedless of his jailers, raised his eyes to Heaven, evidently in prayer. Then, bracing himself as though for a great effort, he squared his shoulders, and with head erect walked on to the waiting motor-car.

The two officers watched him and then burst out laughing. One of them had a fox terrier with him. Raising his stick he called the dog, and with cries of "Hop! Hop!" made the animal jump over the stick.

Fryatt, pale as death, got into the car. Hans told Sœur Marie Antoine that he never faltered from that moment, and met his end like the hero that he was.

Sœur Marie Antoine was ill in bed when I arrived at the prison, but she received me, all the same, in one of the convict cells on the women's side of the prison, where she and the other sisters had taken up their abode, the walls being thicker and thus giving greater protection from the terrible and incessant aerial bombardments which the British and other Allies inflicted on Bruges.



+ D. J. Card. Mercier, Arch. de Malines.

[D. J. Cardinal Mercier, Arch. de Malines]

While I sat by her bedside, she was waited upon by a convict woman condemned to death for the murder of her husband. Her face was concealed, all but the eyes, behind a mask of white cotton. Gruesome, indeed, were some of the things I saw and heard in Belgium at that time.

While in Bruges, we called on the charming old octogenarian, Count Visard de Bocarme, who, after being dispossessed of his functions as Burgomaster by the Germans because he would not bend to their will, had resumed them immediately upon the evacuation. When we asked him where we could lodge, he directed us to the Hôtel du Commerce, adding with a merry twinkle: "They have some good wine. They saved twenty thousand bottles from the Boches!" Like others, I made the acquaintance at this hotel of Baron Segers, Belgian Minister of Marine, Poste and Telegraphs. He advised me, before leaving Belgium, to pay a visit to Ypres. What he told me of that place determined me to follow his advice.

We drove there via Ghistelles, Schoore, Pervyse and Furnes.

The first part of the road did not show such terrible signs of devastation as I had expected, but when we came to the neighbourhood of Schoor, interest in the scene became terrific. One's first impression was of the intense loneliness of the country. Only military vehicles passed up and down the road—great motor lorries laden with the paraphernalia of war or with soldiers on their way to or from the front. On both sides of the road enormous screens of barbed wire had been erected in the hedges, hung with fragments of grey material. These screens served to disguise the movements of troops and vehicles along

the road. All the farm dwellings lay in ruins, their little gardens devastated by shot and shell. Trenches scarred the face of the open country with hurdles in front of them laced with brushwood to form portable screens for local defence or for concealment of guns. The nearer we got to the Yser the greater became the ruin. We passed the village of St. Pierre Cappelle —a shell shot right through the spire of its church showed the blue sky beyond it. The tombstones round it lay in fragments. All the houses of what had once been a prosperous country village were here reduced to heaps of stone and rubble. Passing on, we came to the line of inundations which formed the Belgian defence. No more gruesome spectacle can be imagined than this vast stretch of country partially submerged. There are no words to describe the ghastly desolation of it. There was literally not one tree that had not been stripped of its bark by shell fire, its few remaining branches stretching their bare black limbs to heaven in mute protest against man's brutality. Out of the cold wicked-looking swamp stuck up fragments of buildings, the tag-end of a bridge, the twisted wreckage of an aeroplane. Truly may the valley of the Yser between Schoor and Pervyse be called the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and ample must have been the harvest of death in those once fruitful fields of Flanders. The Yser, on whose banks the tide of battle surged back and forth as success crowned Belgian or German arms, is an unimportant narrow stream, spanned by rickety country bridges, wide enough for the passage of one vehicle only at a time. The trenches, both Belgian and German, were divided by its narrow waters, and in both cases came down to its very

banks. One German dug-out was not ten yards from the river's edge. It was built of stout concrete and good wooden boards, and seemed designed for permanency. On its outer wall it bore the words: "Zu den blutigen Knocken" (To the Bloody Bones) with a hand pointing in the direction of Furnes. This was probably the name they had given to some "beer-shop" in the little town of Furnes, which was once a gem of Flemish architecture. We stopped in the place and almost shed tears at the ruin of its lovely monuments, but although scarred by shell, they preserve their beauty, and still bear witness to their former glory.

From Furnes the road turned south to Ypres, and the nearer we drew to that famous spot, now a monument to British valour and British tenacity, the more complete became the ruin; for no inch of this ground had been spared by friend or foe in the fight for mastery of an outpost which had become symbolic of England's strength. As we neared Ypres the nomenclature of the various depots, barracks and dug-outs changed from French to English, and I noticed among others "Beckworth Camp," "Dawson's Corner," "Whitehouse Billet," "Magenta Farm," "Cheapside" "Cactus Pontoon," "Pink Château" and "Vanity Camp," some of which may recall memories to those who have had personal experience of their charms! At the bridge leading into Ypres we were stopped by an English sentry, who refused us passage, as we had only a Belgian *laissez-passer*. We persuaded him to take us to the British officer in charge of the post, from whom we received a special pass available for one day only—namely, October 24, 1918. This officer was most kind in allowing

us to visit a spot we had come so far to see, but he put us on our honour not to go beyond the outskirts of the ruins, as the battle was in progress not so very far away.

Ypres will require a poet of its own to sing its vanished glory. I can only liken it to a man whose features have been obliterated by fire, but whose soul is still alive behind his sightless eyes. The soul of Ypres lives, but its beauty has been destroyed. There is not a monument, a house, a street or a square of the old town left in its former state—not a tree, not a gravestone standing. There can be no question of rebuilding the town. There is no town to rebuild. A new one must arise on the old site. If one leaves the tracks which, presumably, used to be busy streets, one has to scramble over heaps of brick and stone, so complete is the ruin of one of Belgium's fairest cities. Our motor stuck in a shell-hole in front of what *was* a fine château, of which nothing now remains but two beautiful iron gates hanging on their shattered pillars. Standing among the ruins of Ypres, we looked away over the famous battlefields watered by so much precious English blood. We stood at "Hell-fire Corner," and stepped along the duck-boards of disused British trenches. We went into abandoned dug-outs, and saw fragments of what had once been an army telegraph base. We saw Sanctuary Wood, Mount Kemmel, Whytschaete and Messines, beyond which the fighting still progressed, and Passchendaele of glorious memory. Those moments spent at Ypres were precious moments —moments of emotion almost too sacred to be analysed on paper.

I returned to Ypres quite lately and stood again

under one of the ruined arches of the Cloth Hall, looking out over the town. A few carved fragments of this once beautiful pile of architecture had been brought together to form a rude monument to our glorious dead. Some one had dragged the defaced and broken remains of two stone lions, British lions, and placed them as sentinels on either side. Several wreaths hung upon the walls. One bore the inscription :—

To
The Vanguard
Ypres 1914.

Oh, little mighty Force that stood for England,
Stood fast while England girt her armour on,
Held high our honour in your wounded hands,
Carried our honour safe with bleeding feet,
We have no glory great enough for you!

Another, from the Ypres League, carried the inscription :

In Honoured Memory
of
Those who died,
1914 In the defence of Ypres 1918

On this day, 11th Nov. 1914,
The supreme effort of the
Prussian Guards was shattered
By the exhausted British, and the
Road to the Channel Ports barred.

A simple notice was nailed to the wall of the arch :

This is Holy Ground.
No stone of this Fabric may be taken away.
It is a heritage for all Civilized Peoples.
By order,
TOWN MAYOR, Ypres.

From Ypres we returned by the same road to Bruges, and on the following day were fortunate enough to witness the victorious re-entry of the King of the Belgians, with his Consort and son, into the old Flemish Capital of Belgium. This took place on October 25, and as we were given most excellent seats on the balcony of the "Gouvernement Provincial" looking out on the ancient square, we had a wonderful view of this touching ceremony. At an early hour of the morning the city was agog with excitement. Probably more flags were displayed than ever before, amongst them figuring those of the Allies. At nine o'clock vast crowds had assembled in the square and the streets leading to it. Every window was filled with sightseers. At ten the Burgomaster and Aldermen took up their position on the steps of the "Gouvernement Provincial." The ancient Cathedral's "Bell of Triumph" rang out its greeting to the returning King. After the Belgian National Anthem, the wonderful bells of Bruges chimed out "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise," in honour of Belgium's faithful Allies! Aeroplanes circled overhead and were greeted with loud cheers. Amongst the decorations of the square was a double line of British Naval signal flags, floating from the tower of the old belfry. These flags had been captured by German U-boat commanders from British merchant ships, and had been stored by them, doubtless to be brought forth in Berlin to add to German triumph on some future occasion! I thought it a touching if mute tribute to Belgium's feeling for England that those flags left behind in the hurry of the Huns' departure should figure so conspicuously on this great day. At eleven o'clock the royal

MEDAL STRUCK IN BRUSSELS AFTER THE ARMISTICE

To commemorate the brilliant services rendered to Belgium during the War in the capacity of 'Neutral' ministers, by the Marquis de Villalobar and Mr. Whitlock, representing Spain and the United States

cavalcade entered the square, preceded by mounted gendarmes and a military band. When the King, Queen and Prince on horseback rode into the square, hats and handkerchiefs waved wildly and loyal cheers rent the air. The King, riding between the Queen and the Prince, took up his position in the centre of the square alongside the old monument dedicated to Breydel and de Coninck. A ray of sunlight fell upon the inscription of this monument representing the return of the victorious Brugeois. It was curiously appropriate to the occasion: "Terugkomst der zegepralende Bruggelinge!" The King and Prince were in khaki, like the troops. The Queen wore a simple habit of the same colour, with a becoming white riding hat, which only partially concealed her lovely golden hair. The review of the troops was very simple. I believe they were actually on their way to the front. After it was over, the royal party dismounted and were received on the steps of the "Gouvernement Provincial" by the Burgomaster and large crowds of officials. They entered the vestibule of the beautiful old building, where an official reception took place. It is significant that all the speeches were made in Flemish, the King replying in that language to the Address of Welcome presented to himself and the Queen; but when the royal party took their leave, it was to the sound of the old French cheer "Vive le Roi!" that they passed through the lines of their loyal subjects.

Towards dusk that night we crossed the Belgian frontier on our return to Holland.

CHAPTER XIV

HOLLAND

The end of the war—How the fugitive ex-Kaiser came to Maarn, and how by chance I saw him arrive—The story of the little Dutch soldier who would not let him cross the frontier—The outcast Emperor—Where the Germans had been—Rejoicing in Antwerp and Brussels—The Belgian King has his own again—Tales of the German Revolution—Threats of revolution in Holland—Queen Wilhelmina's courage—That tired feeling.

ON November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed. The end of the war came in sight.

It came so suddenly at the end that one's breath was almost taken away. It seemed incredible that we were to have peace after those four years of war, silence in place of that eternal rumble of artillery so plainly heard at The Hague. And yet we had no right to be taken by surprise, for indications had not been wanting of late showing the direction events were taking. Walter had prepared the Foreign Office two months before for what now actually happened.

The internal conditions of Germany we knew to be such that she could not continue to fight. Revolution, that gaunt after-war spectre, was threatening the war-makers. Only an immediate peace could save Central Europe from being overwhelmed by a wave of "Bolshevism." Germany had awakened perhaps too late to the fact that anarchy in its most virulent form waited at her gates. The people were

prepared to get rid of the man who had brought so much misery upon them. It had been stated, but it seemed hard to believe, that the aristocratic Max of Baden would be their mouthpiece, the instrument selected by Providence to sweep away the old regime and replace it by a democratic Government. And that was what actually happened. The new Chancellor put on the armour of democracy, and headed the popular demand for the abdication of the Kaiser.

Personally, I was sorry that the Germans should throw up their hands and cry "Kamerad" before we had given them the *coup de grace*. I suppose they hoped thereby to save themselves not only the horrors of internal revolution but also the suffering and humiliation of "invasion," of which they knew something.

I had thought of an excellent way of stamping the hall-mark of defeat upon them. Before consenting to sit at the Conference table with them I should have made them cut down every tree within a radius of twenty-five miles round Berlin, starting from the Emperor's Palace as a central point. Not one tree would I have left standing. It would have had the same effect upon their pride as shaving the head of a convict. It would have been a fitting reprisal for the felled orchards of France, and although it would have left our mark upon the beast for at least twenty-five years no one could have called it cruel.

On the morning of Tuesday, November 10, the Kaiser surrendered and crossed into Holland at six o'clock in the morning. We had just come back from Church when news of this stupendous event reached the Legation. Fancy the proud Kaiser sur-

rendering to the Dutch! It was the last thing one expected him to do, and the worst I suppose he could have done for the future of the monarchical cause in his country. Our anxiety for definite news as to what really had happened can be imagined. Telegrams and telephone messages kept the wires hot between the Dutch F.O. and the Legation, until Walter ascertained from the Minister of Foreign Affairs himself that the Emperor actually had come over the Frontier at an early hour that morning, but that the place of his reception and internment was still under discussion. We all jumped to the conclusion that Middachten, the country seat of Count William Bentinck, a friend with whom he had stayed in former days, would be the place selected. It was a lovely day and a most tempting one for a drive, so I volunteered to go in my two-seater to the village of that name, which is about seventy miles from The Hague, to see if I could learn there anything definite of the royal fugitive. But I was unsuccessful, and no sign was visible of the Emperor's presence in that neighbourhood. Rather depressed, I turned my face homewards, and would have got back to The Hague in time for a late dinner had not "Gladys" developed engine trouble, which made it imperative for me to put up for the night at a wayside inn, whence my chauffeur went forth to seek assistance at the nearest garage. The damage having been repaired, I set off again at cock-crow the next morning, and continued my way home, stopping for breakfast at a small country hotel, where I got into telephonic communication with Walter, who told me that the Kaiser was not going to Middachten after all. When I came to Doorn, the very place where the Kaiser is now living, I pulled

up to take a rest and have a look at the village, which is extremely picturesque. On passing the post office I was amazed and greatly excited to see a large placard posted in the window announcing that the Kaiser would arrive that very day at a station called Maarn, not a mile from the place where I stood, and would be received there by Count Godard Bentinck, whose Castle of Amerongen had been selected as his place of detention. Instantly I made up my mind that by hook or by crook I must be an eye-witness of so extraordinarily interesting an historical event. I imagined I could lose myself in the crowd that would gather to see his train come in and thus pass unnoticed. But when I came to Maarn I found it was a lonely little country station, and that no one was present to see the arrival beyond a handful of Dutch officials, the ubiquitous reporters of various journals and a few yokels attracted by curiosity. Amongst the Dutch officials was my old friend, General Onnen, who was in charge of the interned British prisoners of war at The Hague, and who had always been most kind and obliging to me in matters relating to them. When he saw me now, he came quickly forward with extended hand, and, after a warm greeting, congratulated me on having chanced to be in the neighbourhood on such an historic occasion. He told me to stand at a particular spot, where I should have an excellent view of the arrival. He also told me that after all was over I should wait in my car till he could find a moment to send me out, on a slip of paper, the names of all those who had accompanied the Emperor in his flight, together with any other important detail which he thought might interest Walter officially. Of course I was delighted, and went

to take up my stand at the spot he had indicated. But as bad luck would have it I was recognized by the reporter of one of the Dutch newspapers, who came up and asked me if I was not the wife of the British Minister. I was wearing a thick veil at the time, and had only raised it for a moment to blow my nose when this horrid fellow chanced to see my features! Of course I could not deny the soft impeachment, but the fact, I said, was not for publication! "Well, I won't publish it," he said, "but one of those is sure to make capital out of your presence here on such an occasion." I looked at the group of reporters he pointed at, and was surprised to see that not a single English paper was represented. But as the Kaiser's train was signalled at that moment I turned my attention to more interesting details. It was a pouring wet day, and everybody seemed in a very bad temper. The approach to the station from the direction of Amerongen was by a long and very narrow lane, which was completely blocked by the vehicles of the onlookers. I wondered how room could possibly be made for the Emperor's car to drive away, as there appeared to be no other exit. The whole reception was extremely badly stage-managed. But this fact gave me the five minutes' opportunity I had of seeing the Kaiser at very close quarters; his car, as I had anticipated, was unable to leave until many others had been shifted, and he was forced to wait, seated beside Count Godard, exposed to the curious stare of all present, at what I suppose must have been the most unpleasant moment of his life. He looked very white, white-haired and white-faced, when he stepped out of the train and walked past me to the motor-car, talking to Count Godard. But

his gait was firm, and his nonchalance, whether natural or assumed, perfect. He was *crâne*, as the French would say! Count Godard, or more probably the Governor of the Province, who was a noted pro-Boche, had tried to organize a welcoming demonstration by planting a few boys in the branches of the surrounding trees with orders to cheer the fallen monarch. He automatically lifted his hand to respond to this welcome, but it fell back, the gesture unfinished, as a low, prolonged booing drowned the faint cheer. When I got back to the Legation I found that Walter had gone to an Armistice dinner. But mindful of the fact that no British reporter had been witness of the great drama enacted that day, I sent for the representatives of *The Times* and *Daily Mail*, both friends of mine, and gave them a detailed account of all that had happened, which was probably the account read in London on the morning after. Such was the insignificant exit from the stage of history of the most ambitious monarch who ever figured on it!

On November 16, 1918, I was again in Belgium, and I heard the details of that unheroic hour when, a fugitive from his own army, the one-time "Knight in shining armour" stood at the frontier barrier of Holland and begged of a little Dutch soldier for sanctuary within its borders!

The story was told me by the little Dutch soldier himself, only a few days after the event, as we stood together by the frontier-gate at Eysden, near Maastricht, through which the Emperor passed.

He was on duty, that day of the great event, at half-past six in the morning, when a motor-car drove up

rapidly from the Belgian side and stopped at the gate. A German officer alighted, and addressing the soldier, demanded passage for the car.

"That is impossible," said the soldier.

"But I demand that we shall pass," insisted the officer. "The German Emperor himself is here, and he must be allowed to continue his journey into Holland."

The soldier disbelieved the improbable story that the German Emperor wished to enter Holland, and said so, at the same time repeating that he had no permission to allow any German officer to pass through the gates. While the two were arguing, a second German officer descended from the car and came up.

"I wish to pass at once," he said. "You surely recognize me. I am the German Emperor." And as he spoke he faced the soldier, drawing himself up haughtily.

It was indeed the Kaiser, but the astounded soldier stuck to his point, intent only on the fulfilment of his duty.

"I see you are the Kaiser," he replied, "but my orders are to allow none to pass!"

"Who gave you those orders?"

"My captain."

"Where is he?"

"In the guard-room, over there," pointing to a white cottage a little way down the lane. "He is asleep at this hour."

"Call him instantly. Say that the German Emperor is here and must pass through the barrier."

"Very well. I will call him. . . . But first I must lock the gates," said the sturdy Dutchman.

The locks were secured, the captain was awakened,

and in a few moments he arrived to interview the furious Emperor, who still waited on the Belgian side of the frontier-gates. He repeated what the soldier had said, namely, that he could not allow the Kaiser to enter Dutch territory without orders. But he added he would at once telegraph to The Hague for instructions.

"That will take some time," said the Kaiser. "I cannot stand here in the road. Take me to some place where I can wait."

Puzzled as to what to do under such very unlooked-for circumstances, the captain thought a moment and then told the Kaiser that if he would give his word to re-cross the frontier instantly should he be requested to do so, he would ask the station-master to let him wait on the platform of the little station on the Dutch side of the barrier.

The Kaiser gave the required assurance, and advanced to the gate, expecting to be admitted instantly to the haven of Dutch territory. Still the gate stood unopened and remained so while the captain of the guard went to interview the station-master and ask whether he would undertake the responsibility of the Kaiser's presence on his station. The two came back together, the gates were opened, and the royal refugee entered Holland. Walking between the captain and the station-master, he made his way to the platform of the little station.

Here for almost six hours he waited while the captain telegraphed to The Hague the startling news that the Kaiser wished to surrender to the Dutch and to seek in Holland an asylum from his people. Meanwhile, the report of the Kaiser's arrival had spread.

The little station of Eysden lies actually across the frontier line, the platform being in Holland, while the back of the station is in Belgium. A few yards away from the Belgian frontier stands a large factory from which the workers came running. They crowded round the frontier barrier, staring, pointing, hooting and jeering at the figure pacing up and down the platform a few yards away.

Resentful of this unexpected humiliation, the Kaiser signified to the station-master his wish to retire into his office. But the anti-German station-master pointed to the notice on the door, "*Eingang ist verboten*," and, on the strength of it, kept the Kaiser walking up and down the platform.

At The Hague the arrival of the telegram telling of the Kaiser's surrender caused great excitement. The Prime Minister was roused from his bed, and hurried off with the Foreign Minister, Jonkheer Dr. van Karnebeck, to a hasty conference with the Queen. The end of their deliberations was the decision that the Kaiser's surrender should be accepted on condition that he should remain at the frontier until a suitable place of residence could be found for him. After a first refusal, Count Godard Bentinck was with difficulty induced to give him asylum at Amerongen.

Meanwhile, at the frontier, the Kaiser still waited on the open platform of the little station at Eysden, his anger steadily rising at the delay to which he was subjected.

Some one on the station offered him a cigarette, a gift which he accepted. But the act was interpreted by the Belgian onlookers as pro-Boche, and became the signal for a further outburst of cat-calls

WALTER
From the painting by Van Weile, 1919

and booings. At last orders came to close the station and clear it of all but Dutch officials and the Kaiser's suite.

The Emperor had meant to arrive at the frontier barrier by road at the same time as his special train reached it from Spa. He intended to continue in it his journey to The Hague. But the train was for some reason delayed, and arrived at Eysden six hours late—six hours which the Emperor was compelled to pass on the platform exposed to the jeers of his enemies.

The latter part of his enforced wait at Eysden he at least was able to spend in the privacy of his saloon carriage. One can imagine the nature of his reflections that night, for it was not till the next day that he was permitted to proceed to his destination.

On the occasion of my second visit to Belgium, I was accompanied by Lady Malcolm and two British officers, one of whom, Mr. C. Morell, undertook to drive the motor; the other, Rupert Mitford, acting as orderly. We were in high spirits, for the war was over, the Armistice having been signed a few days before. We were the first British to enter Antwerp after the Germans had left it at six o'clock that very morning. With luck, we might have found them still there, for they departed four days before their scheduled time, the attitude of the German sailors in the port having scared them away. Those sailors paraded the streets wearing the red cockade and shooting all officers at sight.

We had left the Legation in the morning at 9.45, Walter waving us a cheery good-bye from the door-

step: it was bad luck that his official duties prevented his coming with us. Driving through Delft to Rotterdam, we crossed the frontier at Putte. As we neared Antwerp we became aware of tremendous excitement in the town, which we presently found was due to the fact that at last, after four years of occupation, the hated Hun had departed. The last of them had marched out at two o'clock. The population was delirious with joy. Every man, woman and child was in the streets, which were gaily decorated with thousands of flags and brilliantly lighted with innumerable lanterns. I never could understand where the Belgians hid all the flags and lanterns which invariably made their appearance before the dust was laid behind the departing enemy.

At the sight of our waving Union Jack and of our two friends in uniform, the crowds in the streets completely lost their heads. They swarmed over the car like flies, kissing the men and so hampering our progress that it was with the greatest difficulty we reached our hotel. Having deposited our luggage, we marched out again to share in a regular mafficking demonstration of which we became the popular centre. Vive les Anglais! Vive les Allies! Again the young men were surrounded and literally smothered with caresses by irrepressible female admirers, who hung in clusters round their necks. Jeanne (Lady Malcolm) and I clung to their belts, afraid of being separated from them in the crowd. No one noticed us; it was the British uniforms that appealed to them. All night we wandered about sharing the madness of a people out of their senses with joy.

Next morning we got off early, for we meant to sleep in Ghent. As we left the town, we encountered

a mounted regiment returning from the Front. They were playing the Belgian National Air, the *Brabanconne*, but at sight of the British uniform they changed their tune to "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," and again a demonstration was made in our favour by the populace that crowded the streets and the beflagged windows and balconies. Never again shall I feel so like a queen in a pageant as I did that day! How happy we all were!

We got into Ghent about seven o'clock that night, and heard that the Germans were still in Brussels. We had followed the road through St. Nicholas and met a continuous stream of army wagons and motor-lorries, all part of the Division which entered Antwerp when the Germans retired.

Many were the tales we heard at Ghent. The Huns had behaved pretty well, apparently, till the day they left. But they signalized their departure by firing their revolvers through the windows of ground floor rooms and destroying statues of King Albert. Before going, they sold everything they could persuade the Belgians to buy. Rifles were offered at fifty centimes each, and in one case a gun and six horses were sold for sixty-five francs.

We had been the first foreigners to enter Ghent after the German evacuation, but before we left many Americans had drifted in and we could not help wondering where they had come from and why they were there.

On the road to Brussels, we found Madame Rentyens stranded in a little wayside inn. She had intended to visit her husband, who was quartered there with his regiment, but before she arrived his marching orders had come, and so she found herself stranded

with no means of getting back to Brussels, for as she told us, the Germans had thoughtfully celebrated their departure from the capital on the previous day by blowing up the three principal stations with time fuses calculated to explode after their departure. The explosion in the Gare du Nord had had particularly disastrous results to life and goods, as it had taken place under an ammunition train. We visited the scene the next day, and picked up lots of curios and bits of loot from amongst the debris! One of the curios which I did *not* pick up was a very smart coffin almost intact, very black, with very shiny knobs. It was doubtless reserved for some extra special brand of German officer. But what I *did* pick up, and still keep in my collection to the great danger of my home, was a chaplet of the little incendiary pastilles—each about the size of a shilling and with a hole in the middle for stringing together—which the Germans used to ignite, and as they passed fling in through the windows of dwelling-houses.

The "Hotel Astoria," where we spent our first night in Brussels, was a wonderful sight, for it had been deprived by the Germans of all its brass fittings, including the electric lights, bath taps, door handles, door plates and even keyholes. All the woollen mattresses and the table and bed linen were of course gone, and in the smart restaurant we used paper napkins and a few rusty old knives and forks that had escaped the general looting.

The menu resolved itself into a basin of soup made from Oxo cubes, which we provided, and a few slabs of underdone meat. Bread there was none, but we got a bottle of beer amongst four, with which we had to be content.

The next day we were carried off from the hotel to his own beautiful house in the Avenue Marnix by Baron Lambert de Rothschild, an old Paris friend of Walter's, who could not do enough to make our stay pleasant. Nor could we have revisited Brussels under more delightful auspices, for he and his charming little daughter, Renée, proved most capable guides. They had lived in their house all through the occupation, and by dint of skilful management had succeeded in hiding from the prying eyes of the Hun inquisitors the really beautiful *objets d'art* with which the house was filled. While we were there all these treasures were again being brought to light and restored to their former places.

One can hardly realize what the Belgians must have gone through during those four years of the occupation. No woman dared stir abroad without male protection, and very often for a trivial offence an embargo was placed upon the movements of inhabitants, who, under no pretext, not even to fetch a doctor for a sick person, were allowed to leave their houses.

The stories of the revolution which broke up the German Army were incredible. Ten picked agents from the Council of Soldiers and Workmen in Berlin arrived in Brussels and did the work in two hours. The Military Governor was arrested and replaced by a soldier wearing a red cockade. The house of Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria was surrounded by soldiers with machine-guns, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that he managed to escape through a back door.

Officers, formerly so arrogant, went in terror of their lives. They hid in garrets and cellars, even under

mattresses in the beds of the hotels; those who could escaped by train from such places as Liège, where the stations had not yet been blown up. There was not room for all; many climbed on to the roofs of the carriages, and some were decapitated passing through the tunnels. Any way was good enough to escape the fury of the soldiers.

Meanwhile the Belgians rejoiced! They were free at last. One of them offered to show us his house, in which the Huns had spent *one night* before the evacuation. It was one of a row of houses each like the other in a small side street. The door knocker and handle were gone, I noticed, but he pushed open the door and we entered. In front was a little staircase littered with straw like a cowshed. At the top of the stairs was the coat and umbrella stand broken to fragments. We passed into the drawing-room, also carpeted with straw. Every chair and sofa was slashed and the contents bulging from the holes. The notes of the piano had been crammed with bread to prevent them playing, and the music lay around in torn fragments. All the portraits on the walls had had the eyes gouged out and landscapes were slashed right across. We went upstairs to his wife's bedroom. The mattresses gaped from deep incisions, the looking-glass had been smashed with a hammer, and the doors of the wardrobe had been lifted from their hinges. But the worst sight met our eyes in the dining-room. We stood for a moment contemplating a scene of wreckage and filth such as defies description. The gentle Germans had slept in this room, and before going had left their marks all round the dado. The smell was so offensive that I moved across to open the window, but my guide seized me

by the hand and, pointing to the floor in the centre of the room, exclaimed, "Gare, Madame! Attention où vous mettez le pied!" On the chimney-piece was a Sèvres vase. Its fellow stood apparently intact on the floor. "Au moins ils ont epargné ce vase de Sèvres," I said to my host, and turned it over in my hand to look for the mark, as one instinctively does when handling a good bit of china. But "Mon Dieu!" I cried, "ils en ont fait un vase de nuit!" Oh, the Huns! was ever refinement of beastliness equal to theirs!

The people of Brussels were rejoicing. They had brought out some wonderful statues of Victory secretly made in plaster during the occupation to figure on the great day of deliverance. Coloured to look like bronze, the effect they made was grand, and the King would be pleased on the morrow, they said, when he entered his capital! The idea seemed to me charming. All over the town they were busy setting them up.

Whilst in Brussels, we dined with the Spanish Minister, the Marquis de Villolobar, the best friend Belgium had in her hour of need and the most deservedly popular diplomatist in Brussels. He had taken charge of us the moment we arrived in the capital, and had made every arrangement that would enable us to see all that was interesting of the ceremonies that filled those busy days. At his house that night I sat between Cardinal Mercier and Burgomaster Max, two of the most arresting figures in the history of the German occupation.

Cardinal Mercier, the courageous prelate who systematically defied the Hun in the interest of his flock, told me how he had contrived to get to Rome to

answer to the Pope for the publication of his famous Encyclical. On his return, he crossed to England in a British warship and was received by King George. Then he managed to slip through the German lines and to rejoin his people, who owed everything to his courageous moral attitude. He was a splendid figure, tall and ascetic, in crimson robe and biretta, with a magnificent jewelled cross hanging from a gold chain round his neck. Burgomaster Max, my other neighbour, was a typical bourgeois, who seemed none the worse for his awful experiences in a Hun prison, where daily his tormentors visited him offering him freedom in return for a betrayal of his duty towards his country.

One day, we made an excursion from Brussels to Louvain. We travelled along the line of route taken by the Germans in their retreat only two days before. Everywhere were signs of their passing—debris of every kind, wrecked cars, blown-up wagons and ammunition carriages, for what they couldn't take with them they destroyed. A Belgian gentleman, by name M. Dubois, welcomed us in his house and graphically related to us the experiences of that awful night, the first of the invasion, when in 1914 the Germans marched into the town and ordered all the inhabitants to report themselves. He described the agony of those frightened groups in the squares who waited, not knowing what would happen next. A call was made for some one who could speak German, in answer to which our friend stepped forward. His hands were then tied behind his back, and, prodded with bayonets, he was made to march, almost foodless and without drink for five days and five nights at the head of the army, showing them the way to

Brussels. We found Louvain, of course, in ruins. The beautiful old church had been used as a barracks by the Germans.

Monsieur Dubois told us that the happiest moment he had had since war began was on the day of the evacuation when he met a German soldier in the street. Emboldened by the approaching deliverance of his beloved town, he stopped the soldier and asked him if it was true he was going back to Germany that day. "Ja, mein Herr," answered the soldier. "Then take that back with you!" said Monsieur Dubois, and gave him a resounding smack on either cheek. Fancy an unarmed Belgian striking a Hun! What a priceless experience!

On November 23, the King and his consort re-entered Brussels, and, thanks to the kind offices of the Spanish Minister, the Marquis de Villolobar, who contrived that I should be given all the privileges which belonged to my husband's rank in the Diplomatic Service, I witnessed the ceremony from a point of vantage, and later in the day occupied a seat in the Loge Diplomatique when H.M. reopened Parliament. With him riding into the town, was the Queen, so beloved of the people, Prince Albert of Windsor in Flying Corps Uniform, little Princess Marie Josephine, her golden hair loose upon her shoulders, the Count of Flanders, tall and slim, wearing British uniform out of compliment to his father's Ally, and Prince Charles of Brabant, the King's younger son, in the uniform of a Dartmouth Cadet. The crowd went mad at sight of them and cheer upon cheer woke the echoes. No police were present, the King having expressed a wish to General Buffon, in command of the Brussels garrison, that the people at least on that day should

be absolutely free. But he consented to the services of the Boy Scouts being enlisted, 5,000 of whom had been secretly trained during the occupation.

On the evening of that day, the King was received at the Hotel de Ville by Burgomaster Max and the other city councillors. We looked down from the balcony upon that wonderful old Gothic square, and not one inch of it was vacant. Yet no one was there to guard the King's approach but those same Boy Scouts.

We waited upstairs in the beautiful tapestried Hall for the moment of his entrance, and when the door was flung open and a herald stepped forward and, with a fanfare of trumpets, announced "Messieurs! Le Roi!" the scene was worthy of Rembrandt. The King stood for a moment framed in the doorway, pale with emotion. Then he stepped forward and shook hands with the city dignitaries and other guests present. But the people still waited without. Passing on to the balcony, he showed himself to them. The dark night was illumined by myriads of artificial lights, which shed a radiance upon thousands of upturned faces waiting breathless for the coming of their King. When at last they saw him, thunderous applause rent the air. "Long live King Albert! Long live our King!" He bowed gravely in response, then passing through a doorway proceeded to sign his name in the Livre d'Or, that historic book which during the whole of the occupation had been successfully concealed from the Germans by his faithful subjects, and preserved for this great hour.

On the following day, Cardinal Mercier received the Royal Family at the door of the Church of Ste Gudule for the Service of Thanksgiving.

Having conducted them to the throne prepared for them, he turned to the people and was about to give them the Benediction, when a burst of cheering broke the silence, in which a whole people gave voice to the pent-up feeling of years. It was the first time such a thing had ever happened in a Catholic Church, and at any other moment it would have seemed irreverent, but on that day the Cardinal, who understood human nature from his long and intimate dealings with it, realized that there are moments even in the life of a nation when suppressed emotion must find a natural outlet.

So he waited on the altar steps, with hand uplifted, a kindly smile upon his face, till the cheer died down, and the people knelt again while he completed the half-finished gesture of Benediction.

In August, 1918, Walter was approached by a Dutch emissary, evidently inspired from German official sources, who put before him the whole circumstantial story of a proposed German plot having for its object an anti-Monarchical revolution in Germany, designed to meet President Wilson's declaration that no negotiations for peace would be entertained which emanated from a Government having a Hohenzollern at its head. A revolution which would sweep aside the whole Hohenzollern regime would, it was hoped, pave the way to the opening of peace negotiations.

Every detail of the proposed revolution was set forth, the names of those engineering it were disclosed, and it was asserted that the Emperor himself was a party to the plan. The date for the change of Government was given as November 1. But it was cynically disclosed at the same time that the revolution would be but a sham, *organized* for the purpose of

establishing conditions which would tempt the Allies to a discussion of peace terms, and that as soon as possible it would be followed by a counter-stroke re-establishing the old order—with one change. Instead of the deposed Emperor being restored, his grandson would be raised to the Throne and a Regency established.

Prince Henry of Prussia was named as the probable Regent, the belief being that he would be specially acceptable to the British.

The Dutch emissary was quickly enlightened as to the feeling entertained in England for the Kaiser's brother, and at a subsequent interview he professed to have made a mistake. Prince Max of Baden was the proposed Regent, not Prince Henry.

Such was the story brought to the Legation, and the fact that the revolution subsequently did take place, and almost to the day on the date named, goes far to prove that in the main it was a true one and inspired by official Germany. Yet when Walter reported it to the Foreign Office it was received with scepticism and there were some highly placed persons who, judging by past experience, pooh-poohed the idea of so well-disciplined a people as the Germans seeking peace in revolution.

Revolution was certainly "in the air" in 1918. We even had a threat of it at The Hague. Rumours of the expected German revolution were designedly circulated in the neighbouring country, and late in the summer of 1918 this seed began to bear fruit, a great impression being made by it, which the Socialist Party was quick to improve and make use of. The Dutch Socialists are a large and active party, and wielded at that time considerable influence in

the country, only one other part—the Catholic—being able to hold its own against them.

So puffed up and elate did the Socialists become by the success of the German Revolution that the autumn found them openly boasting of their intention to upset the existing form of government in Holland and replace it by a Republic on German lines. They even had the audacity and foolhardiness to proclaim the date of their intended *coup*, which they fixed for November 18—ten days ahead.

This over-confidence defeated its own end. It put the weapon of preparedness into the hands of the anti-revolutionary party, who had thus been given time to take the necessary steps for countering the Socialist move. The head of the Roman Catholic Party, which in the Netherlands is an extremely strong and well-organized body, acted in this emergency with all the intelligence and political foresight which mark his hold upon the organization he controls.

Quickly and secretly he circulated throughout the country his instructions as to the steps to be taken to counteract the feared disturbance, and to secure the safety of the Royal Family and the town. Special troops and police were drafted in: the public departments and all public buildings were guarded by machine-guns, and shop windows were securely barricaded. The tension which had prevailed began to relax, however, before the date fixed for the revolution had arrived, for it was pretty well known ere the fateful November 18 dawned that the movement had been nipped in the bud by the prompt measures taken to suppress it.

The Queen's personal attitude at that time was a factor which counted greatly in saving the situation.

It was worthy of the highest traditions of sovereignty. She refused to allow herself to be intimidated by threats against her throne and person, threats which she insisted on attributing to a few hotheads disaffected by the general unrest caused by four years of war in all the neighbouring countries.

In spite of entreaties, she went out on foot into the streets, accompanied only by Princess Juliana. This courageous behaviour made an excellent impression on the people, who were proud to see the representatives of their beloved House of Orange display such confidence in their affection.

The immediate effect was visible on the day fixed for the revolution, and it was more in order to be the object of a loyal demonstration than to face a hostile mob that the Queen drove through the streets of The Hague that day with the young heiress to the throne. The day which was to have seen the downfall of her House saw instead a scene of unsurpassed devotion to the royal cause, a day unequalled perhaps in Dutch history, and the gallant woman who by her courage contributed so largely to this result found her carriage drawn by willing hands in triumph through the streets of her capital back to her home and palace.

There can have been only one fly in the ointment for the Queen that day, only one feature of that great popular demonstration which may have been disturbing to so rigid a Calvinist. The Royalist movement she knew was organized by the Catholic Party: it was the Catholic Party that saved her; nine-tenths of the banners carried that day bore emblems of the Roman Catholic Church.

Owing to our preoccupation at that time with our own great interests at home, very little notice was

taken in England of this outstanding episode in the life of Queen Wilhelmina.

The Queen of Holland is a singularly modest woman, though undoubtedly possessing the gift of government in a high degree. The question of how far a ruling queen really does exercise her prerogative is one always arousing a lively interest, though it is one that can seldom be so decisively answered as in the case of Queen Wilhelmina. I have been assured by her Ministers of State that she is gifted with political acumen far above the average and that she holds the reins firmly in her own hands. She was carefully educated and trained for the part she has to play by her capable mother, and, being naturally hard-working, she has made herself fully conversant with affairs of State.

All matters have to be laid before her by the Ministers concerned. She listens to their reports silently, yet few details escape her, and when she finally makes her comments before coming to a decision it is evident, so they tell me, that she has mastered the technical details of the point at issue and remembers all that has previously been said on the matter under discussion. After listening carefully to the case as stated by her Ministers, she herself decides on the course to be taken.

Several times during my stay in Holland, I was summoned as the wife of the British Minister to a private audience of the Queen. But it may be imagined how difficult it was for her as sovereign of a neutral country, and for me as an Englishwoman in an official position, to find common ground for conversation that did not touch upon the all-absorbing topic of war, or anything relating to it.

Our mutual love of children helped us out on these occasions, and on the subject of English babies, whom she deemed adorable, and our English ways of education, we found a common meeting ground.

Domestic life in the Royal Palace at The Hague centred round Princess Juliana, the Queen's one little daughter. Yet the child was not spoilt, and had to undergo the same thorough education which her mother had herself received to fit her for her future great position.

During the war all entertaining at the palace was abandoned, and it was whispered that the Queen did not regret the necessity for this, as she does not care for this form of hospitality. Even the tea-parties which used to be given for the Princess were abandoned, so that the child saw and knew very few people.

Incredible as it may sound, I must confess to having never set eyes on her during the two years or more that we were at The Hague. In winter, I believe, she was allowed to skate on the public rinks, but apart from this her daily drive seems to have been the only occasion on which she was seen in public.

The Queen's favourite pastime is riding. Her passionate love of horses exhibits her in one of her most attractive rôles, that of a fearless Amazon. She allows no horse to be bought for her that she has not previously tried herself, and occasionally will even break in a young horse for her personal use.

At Scheveningen, when the Court was in residence there during the summer, she was sometimes seen out before seven o'clock in the morning, enjoying a hard gallop along the edge of the sea. One can imagine the pleasure of those early rides to a woman hedged in all day by the trammels of Court life.

LADY SUSAN TOWNLEY, 1922

At Scheveningen also, she indulged her other great passion, that of Art. Queen Wilhelmina is an artist of no mean talent. Her watercolour sketches are charming, and many is the picturesque street corner or canal she has committed to canvas before her subjects are awake in the morning. She loves sketching from Nature and chooses that early hour because she is then less likely to attract attention. Few people, unless they knew her by sight, would be likely to suspect that the simple artist sketching by the wayside was the Queen of the Netherlands!

We were frightfully busy at The Hague after the signing of the Armistice.

The Prisoners of War were wild with excitement at the rapid march of events, beating their wings against the bars of the cage so soon to be opened. Both officers and N.C.O.'s now had to be repatriated as soon as arrangements could be made. How much one would miss them! What a big void their going would leave! But one rejoiced wholeheartedly for them. Imagine freedom after four years, and in some cases more, of "control," to apply the mildest term to the *durance vile* they had suffered!

I think it was their going that made us begin to sigh definitely for our own release. We were beginning to feel the strain of so diversified an existence as ours had been during the last 25 years.

CHAPTER XV

The 'Indiscretions' of Lady Susan

I HAVE been in fifty minds about writing this last chapter, because in it I must justify the title of my book. It is only fair, however, to my husband that I should state how it came about that I unwittingly checked a career which, judged upon its own merits, ought admittedly to have had a brilliant ending.

When the war was over and private individuals, like Governments, began to review the situation in the light of recent developments, Walter came to the conclusion that unless Diplomacy offered in the near future a real bait to ambition, he would sooner retire from it.

We were both tired of our long exile abroad. To be quite honest, we were more particularly tired of the "habit" acquired by the Prime Minister during the war of popping the plums of our Service into the mouths of ex-Cabinet Ministers and others, although in most cases they had no claim to them, being devoid of that expert training which is necessary for the proper fulfilment of the functions appertaining to so highly specialized a profession.

"Amateur" diplomacy does not always work the wonders expected of it, as was proved only the other day at Genoa when Mr. Lloyd George was confronted

at the Council Table with a Russo-German Agreement negotiated in Berlin, the existence of which, he is reported to have said, came upon him as a complete surprise. This to "trained" diplomacy seems inexplicable. How could such an Agreement have escaped the vigilance of "the man on the spot"? But if, on the other hand, aware of its existence, why did the Premier not take the Nation into his confidence concerning it when he sought his Genoa mandate in the House of Commons?

But to return to my point. This little weakness of the Prime Minister's so discouraged Walter that he decided to put his future to an early test, and to that end went to London in December, 1918, to have a talk with the Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

He did not beat about the bush, but asked straight out what his prospects were. After a slight hesitation the Private Secretary came out with the statement that it was useless for him to count upon the future, as, although his own record was first-rate, the "indiscretions of Lady Susan" had made it impossible to advance him further in the Service. Asked what he meant by so astounding a pronouncement, the Private Secretary replied vaguely with some generality, and, whilst expressing his sincere regret at having to be the mouthpiece of so disagreeable an intimation, begged that Walter would take nothing from him as final, but would see Lord Hardinge himself, the Under Secretary of State.

Walter accordingly sought out Lord Hardinge, who received him by appointment in his own house, and, after murmuring something about Lady Susan and the ex-Kaiser, adopted his most pompous manner

and pleaded that the whole subject was so painful that he could not enter into it. He merely wished to confirm what the Private Secretary had said.

The reason given by the Private Secretary being so obviously trumped up, and one, moreover, so closely affecting the honour of his wife, Walter generously concluded that in some unexplained way he was personally to blame and had forfeited the confidence of the Foreign Office. Acting upon this surmise, and feeling that, under the circumstances, his services could no longer be of value to the country, he straightway sent in his resignation to Mr. Balfour, then Foreign Secretary, addressing it to him in Paris, where he was at the moment.

To this Mr. Balfour replied that, far from having forfeited the confidence of His Majesty's Government, my husband's valuable services were fully recognized and greatly appreciated. He could, however, hold out no prospect of his further advancement in the Service *for reasons into which it was unnecessary to enter*, but which he understood *had been informally explained to him*. Note the phrases in italics in conjunction with the fact of what they meant to a man who had spent over thirty-three years in the service of his country.

Mr. Balfour, although accepting Walter's resignation, appealed to his public spirit not to insist upon its taking effect at once, and begged him to remain at his post until Peace should be signed.

Although this appeared to me rather a tall order, to use a slang phrase, seeing that I was not considered sufficiently discreet to make my husband's promotion possible, I would not go against the public spirit which prompted him to accede to a request made in the interest of the country. He therefore consented to remain

at The Hague until July 1, by which time he deemed that Peace would be signed—not a bad shot as it turned out, for it was actually signed on June 28.

In his letter to Mr. Balfour intimating this decision, Walter added that, in fairness to himself, considering how vital the matter was to his career which now was to end in what must appear failure to the outside world, he begged the favour of a personal explanation from the Secretary of State on his return to England, as he was not satisfied to accept judgment of his case second-hand and "informally" from the Private Secretary in the Department. This explanation was promised by Mr. Balfour, but to this day it has never been vouchsafed, though opportunity can hardly be said to have been wanting.

Walter's friends at the Foreign Office, from the highest to the lowest, were most sympathetic in this matter. One of them wrote him a private letter, which I have kept. "I deplore more than ever," it said, "your decision to leave us. As I look down that blooming list of Diplomats, I fail to see a better man, and it gives me a real pang to think that you are abandoning us!"

Almost immediately upon the circumstances which led to my husband's resignation came certain questions asked in the House of Commons by Mr. Bottomley, who presumed to call in question my loyalty by asking the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he was aware that I was a member of a Committee which received the ex-Kaiser on his arrival in Holland.

Captain Craig (Antrim, S.), interposing before an answer could be given, asked whether it was in accordance with usage that a Member should avail himself

of the privileges of the House for the purpose of bringing so grave a charge against a lady. The Speaker allowed the question. It does not seem to me to be "playing the game" to allow a charge to be brought against a woman in a place where she is debarred from defending her good name. The Speaker was, however, entitled, I am told, by the usage of the House, to make the decision he did. I would undoubtedly have brought an action for libel against Bottomley had he not formulated his charge in a privileged place. This was doubtless why he selected the House of Commons in which to attack me.

The Foreign Office alone were in a position to defend my good name, for they knew my record during the war, and the true circumstances of the case. But their Representative in the House confined his remarks to stating that as no Committee of Reception had been organized, I could not have headed it, or words to that effect.

I hope I may be forgiven if I show a certain animus on this question. I feel very strongly about it. After twenty-five years devoted to playing my humble part in my husband's life-work for his country, to be branded as "indiscreet" is no light matter, nor was it pleasant to be used as the whip to lash him out of the Service. The only thanks he got on quitting the Foreign Office, the only recognition of his services vouchsafed, was a laconic intimation from the chief clerk of the Foreign Office that the Treasury had granted him a pension of £1,300 a year!

Of course, I am aware that if the Foreign Office consider it worth while to defend themselves against this feeble criticism of their ways, they have but to say that in the Diplomatic Service all cannot attain

to Ambassadorial rank. They will add that, rightly or wrongly, the highest diplomatic positions have always been decided by selection rather then seniority, and that the Secretary of State is not called upon to explain why certain Ministers close their careers at Legations whilst others attain to Embassies.

Quite so, but in this case I happen to have been told before the war, by a responsible authority in the Foreign Office, that Walter's work in Persia had given so much satisfaction that it was probable he would get the Embassy in Berlin when it should fall vacant at the expiry of the term of Sir Edward Goschen. I was even authorized to write to him to this effect, which I did in a letter which he has kept.

On July 1, 1919, my husband made his bow to the public, retiring from the stage of Foreign Affairs after playing his difficult part thereon for thirty-four years. We are now living in the country and breeding large black pigs, which, if not quite so interesting, is at least more remunerative and less exacting than Diplomacy.

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